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SPIRITUAL CRUMBS

FROM THE

MASTER'S T

BY

GERHARD TERSTEEGEN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY

SAMUEL JACKSON.

LONDON :

JOHN F. SHAW, SOUTHAMPTON ROW.

RUSSELL SQUARE.

MDCCCXXXVII.

293.

T. C. JOHNS,
Red Lion st. Fleet-st.

PREFACE.

“THE Life and Extracts from the Writings of GERHARD TERSTEEGEN” having met with a very favourable reception from the religious public, so that a *third* edition has already appeared; the Translator has been induced to think, that a further selection from his writings would also prove acceptable to his pious countrymen. He has accordingly furnished, in the following pages, a few of his printed discourses, which in Germany have survived a sixth edition, and partake greatly of the spirit of the previous work.

These discourses—originally thirty in number—were taken down, as appears from his life, at the time when they were delivered, and being for the most part extemporaneous, particular beauty of style or methodical arrangement must not be expected from them. Their chief excellency will be found to consist in the spirit of deep and fervent piety which pervades them,

and which will communicate its unction to the hearts of those who are sincerely seeking spiritual nourishment. Nor must their evangelical simplicity be overlooked, which renders them suitable for the edification of every denomination and class of Christians.

The Translator is well aware of the superabundance of printed discourses in this country, and how superfluous it may seem to add to their number. But, as far as his own observation extends, such of them as are directed solely to the promotion of advancement in spirituality and Christian experience, continue to be read and appreciated. The individual who is desirous of obeying the apostolic injunction, not to continue cleaving exclusively to the mere rudiments of the doctrine of Christ, but to go forward towards perfection, feels the want of spiritual food appropriate to such a state. Being no longer "a babe in Christ," milk is no longer a suitable aliment for him; he requires stronger food, by which he may be enabled to overcome the difficulties which place themselves before him at every step, and to bear the heat and burden of the day. He needs a light, to point out more clearly to him the path in which he ought to

walk, and to set more conspicuously before his eyes, the prize of his high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He requires to be cheered and encouraged at the contemplation of the labour and suffering still to be endured, and the enemies still to be overcome; and for these purposes the exhortations and directions of one, who made such great attainments in the divine life, as the pious author of these discourses, will be found consolatory, invigorating, and useful.

That they may be thus blessed, and promote the edification of every reader, is the sincere wish and prayer of

THE TRANSLATOR.

HERNE HILL, SURREY,

January, 1837.

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And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord, in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house, where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts ii. 1—4. 212

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SPIRITUAL CRUMBS.

CHRIST WEEPING OVER JERUSALEM.

God be praised, who permits us to see another Quarterly Fast-Day! O that we were able to say this with that sincerity of heart, with which we reasonably ought to say it.

Supposing that a person who had died during the last three months, in a state of impenitence, and who had entered upon a miserable eternity, might return to this world for the purpose of keeping a fast-day and seeking his conversion—would not such a one say, ‘God be praised for affording me a fast-day, in which I can repent, that I may not be cast into hell and eternal torment on account of my sins! Ought we not, therefore, to regard it as a great favour, that we are permitted to keep another fast-day, and thus to prepare for a blissful eternity? All our days ought reasonably to be days of penitence and preparation for eternity. But our hearts are much too slothful and negligent. We have,

therefore, to thank the great love and compassion of God for affording us such particular days and appointed times, in which we are the more forcibly and impressively reminded of our duty. Therefore let this be a truly important fast-day to us; that we may not keep it merely from custom, but with a devout, penitent, and prayerful heart in the presence of God. Let us, therefore, commence our devotions with prayer, and all now present humble themselves before the present majesty of God.

PRAYER.

“O Lord, our God, teach us to pray on this day of fasting and prayer! Thou art a Spirit, and desirest to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. How often have we appeared before thy Sacred Majesty with empty and hypocritical words! how often have we offered strange fire on thine altar, and drawn near to thee with our lips, whilst our hearts were far from thee! Mercifully forgive us this sin, and let us now draw near unto thee with our hearts, and adore thee with our spirits. Let our prayer be the language of our hearts, and not go forth out of feigned lips.

O Lord, thou eternal and omniscient God, before whom every heart now present lies open and naked! Thou knowest, O Lord, our misery, and how very unfit we are to speak with such a holy God. Grant us the spirit of true prayer, that we may approach thee in the name of Jesus, lift up holy hands unto thee, and pray to thee in an acceptable manner. O

impress us with a sense of thy majesty and greatness, and also of thy loving kindness and goodness, that we may reverentially and confidentially adore thee as our God !

Thou art the Lord our God, who hast made us, and not we ourselves ; thou hast given us life and breath, and preserved us to the present day. Thou mightest long ago have deprived us of them, since so many fast-days have passed away unprofitably ; our hearts bless thy long suffering, goodness, and mercy, that we are still preserved, and that thou art granting us another fast-day. O how many have been snatched away into eternity during the last three months—perhaps into an awful eternity ; and yet thou hast spared us : only that we might come to reflection, and consider more seriously what belongs to our deliverance, our salvation, and our peace, and that we might still find grace, in this our day of grace.

Now, O Lord, we are assembled here, by thy good hand upon us, for the purpose of keeping a day of real fasting and prayer ; let our hearts also be collected, that we may continue in thy presence in a penitential and prayerful state of mind. O let thy influence be powerfully felt by us and in us ! Grant grace, that when thy Gospel is now preached and heard, it be not delivered in a cold and lifeless manner, but in the power of thy Spirit, and listened to with the ardent desires of the heart ; that thus we may be effectually convinced, inwardly awakened, and urged and encouraged to resign ourselves to thee.

O Lord Jesus, to this end I resign my heart and all that I am! Work in me that which is well pleasing to thee. Regard not my unworthiness and insufficiency, but put the words into my mouth, that I shall speak, and bless them according to the necessities of each, that every one may receive his portion of spiritual good, from thine alone holy and gracious Spirit. To this end, be every heart now present resigned to thee, O Lord Jesus! and let every heart in particular be regarded by thee at this time with compassion, and its necessities supplied.

O have pity upon us, and let not hypocrisy defile our worship; that this may not be a day which shall tend to our condemnation, but to our salvation and benefit in time and eternity. Hear, then, our supplications, and forgive us our sins, which render us unworthy of being heard, for the sake of thy meritorious sufferings, in the power of thy sacred intercession with the Father. Amen."

LUKE XIX. 41, 42.

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

VERY important, dearest friends, are the words of Paul, with which he commences his letter to the Hebrews, when he says, "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto

the fathers, by the prophets, hath, in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son." In these words, Paul shows us the greatness of the love of God to man, which makes use of, first one means, and then another, to bring back poor mortals from the path of perdition, and also how little every thing avails, unless Jesus Christ himself put his hand to the work.

God has in former times, and in divers manners, spoken to the fathers. He spoke to them by a variety of visions, by visible manifestations, and by dreams in the night; he spoke to them by many wonderful works which he did in Egypt, and by the many marvels he wrought in the desert, before the eyes of the children of Israel. God spoke to them on Mount Sinai, by the giving of his law; God spoke to them by the many prophets whom he sent them from time to time. He spoke to them by the whole external ceremonial of divine worship, by which it was intended to typify to the ancient people of Israel the true nature, sanctity, and necessity of an inward divine worship, as well as the indispensable necessity of the atonement by the blood of Christ, the only atoning sacrifice. But with all this, Israel still continued "stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears,"—all had been unavailing. At length God sent his Son in the flesh, who was the great prophet of whom Moses and all the prophets had spoken, and had testified, that he would bring salvation, and that to him they ought to listen.

But God has also spoken in a variety of ways to

us. He speaks to us through all nature and creation, which we daily see before our eyes ; all nature is a word of God to us, by which he speaks to us and makes himself known. In the book of nature we ought, therefore, to read the infinite Omnipotence, wisdom, and goodness of our dear and heavenly Father. God speaks to us also by the changes which we see in nature, in which times and seasons, summer and winter, day and night, continually take the place of each other, and in which, that which springs up, soon fades away again ; in order that we may reflect upon the instability and transitory nature of every thing temporal and earthly, call to mind our own transitory state, and press forward unto that which is durable and eternal.

God speaks to us, further, by all his judgments, by adversity, by sorrow and disease, which we either experience ourselves, or which is endured by those that belong to us, or which we see in our neighbours, fellow-citizens, or in our vicinity. What else does God seek to teach us by this, than that we, on our part, should take care that the same thing does not happen to us, and that we may escape the well deserved judgment and punishment of sin.

God speaks to us by the powerful voice of his law in our consciences, when he sets before us the curse on account of the transgression of his commands ; when he lets us become anxious and afraid because of our sins and transgressions ; and when he plunges us into fear and terror, as often as we think of the great day of judgment, when we must

give an account of the things done in the body, whether they be good or bad.

God speaks to us also by his manifold benefits, which he bestows upon us, both in body and soul. O how many blessings do we not daily receive at his hands of a temporal nature, in his feeding and clothing us, and preserving us from innumerable evils, and in his granting us a variety of enjoyments, by which this life is not only rendered tolerable but agreeable to us ! What does God intend to say to us by this ? That we ought, by such benefits, to let ourselves be incited to love him heartily, to thank him heartily, and to praise him heartily. But he reminds us also by them, that we ought to lay up a store against a long and endless eternity ; he seeks not merely to satisfy us with temporal things, but also to make us careful with regard to future, infinite, and eternal things.

And therefore it is that God speaks to us also by such a variety of benefits, which he grants us with respect to the soul, in instructing us by his gospel in the way of salvation, in causing the grace which Christ has obtained for us to be offered to us, and in bearing with us, and still having patience with us, notwithstanding our sins, our failings, and infirmities. See ! in all this God speaks to us, that we may let ourselves be induced by it to lay hold on eternal life.

But how little has all this hitherto availed with many ! how little effect have all these means, whether gentle or severe, produced ! Jesus himself must therefore take up the matter ; he must preach

to our hearts, if it is to be of any avail with respect to us. Let every one therefore give heed to his heart, and to what Jesus will preach to him on this occasion ; for we must hear this preacher inwardly, and not be satisfied with the mere outward sound of words.

We will now, with the Divine assistance, consider from the words we have read, the affecting penitentiary discourse of our Saviour Jesus ; in doing which we will contemplate,

I. The gracious preacher,

II. The pathetic sermon, and

III. The necessary application and appropriation to ourselves.

“ O dearest Saviour Jesus ! thou self-existing eternal word of the Father ! Be thou thyself the preacher in our hearts on this occasion, in order that we may each receive a blessing. Speak, O Lord, and thy servants will hear. Amen ! ”

I. The gracious preacher presented to us in the words we have read, is the Son of God himself, Jesus Christ our Saviour. Ought we not, therefore, to sit here before him with the greatest reverence and heartfelt devotion and desire, and listen to him with a truly attentive, devout, and abstracted heart ? The whole of Scripture is a divine sermon, and ought to be venerable and important in our esteem ; but the words of Jesus, in particular, are emphatically the words of God ; they are the words which the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of

the Father, has himself preached to us : all his words have an especial power and unction in them—they are spirit and life.

This preacher is, first, a powerful, yea, an Almighty preacher, who can speak and preach “as one having authority,” as it is said in Matt. vii. 29. He has not only power and might to command, but he has also power and might to affect the heart, and to give that which he commands, and of which he preaches. Men can tell us what God requires of us, they can instruct and admonish us ; but they do not give us the power to accomplish it, they do not give us the substance ; but when Jesus preaches and exhorts us, he gives us also the power to accomplish it, he gives us the thing itself of which he preaches. If we are, therefore, desirous of hearing him on this occasion, and of paying attention to his operations in our hearts : he will not only preach repentance, but give repentance ; not only preach the necessity of prayer, but also impart a praying heart. O Lord Jesus ! give what thou enjoimest, and command what thou wilt.

Jesus is not only a powerful, but also

2. A present, yea, an Omnipresent preacher. It stands here, “when he was come near.” Jesus came near to the city of Jerusalem. God had caused much to be preached to the Jews, and for a long period ; he had predicted and promised them so much concerning Jesus and the Messiah ; Jesus was at length come ; he came in particular to Jerusalem ; and they had themselves heard his doctrines, seen

his miracles, and besides that, had also heard what he had taught, and what wonders he had done during the year in which he traversed the Jewish territory; they had also heard much from the people that followed him; but, notwithstanding this, they had no desire to come to him. But now he comes again to them, and presents himself to them for the last time (for, this that we have read happened on Palm Sunday, only five days before the crucifixion): he presented himself to the city, he presented himself to the people once more as their Messiah, who so earnestly desired their salvation and their peace. He came near: "Lo! here am I, once more," as if he had said, 'will you now receive me; will you now recognize me as your Messiah. Lo! I offer myself to you, and now come and am ready to shed my blood and to lay down my life for you.'

Now Christ drew near, not only to the city of Jerusalem, but has also come near to all men; yes, God in Christ has graciously drawn near to us men, by the word having been made flesh. Christ took upon himself our poor and destitute humanity. God's chief intention in this was that he might then draw near to mankind, and present himself to their hearts. We could not have borne it had God approached us in his holiness, had he spoken to us with the voice of his justice; he therefore draws near to us through Jesus Christ. In Christ, God and the kingdom of heaven are come nigh unto us. Hence also Christ preached, saying, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

Now, although our dearest Saviour does not present himself to us outwardly or bodily, yet in virtue of his glorification, he is unspeakably near to each and every one of us, whether we know it or not. He is now also standing near our hearts, as is testified in Rev. iii. 20. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, whosoever shall hear my voice and open the door, to him will I enter, and sup with him, and he with me." This we ought to apprehend with believing hearts.

Oh ! Jesus is every where near and present with us, not only when we are at church, or when we are at the meeting : but also in our closet, in the field, on the way, wherever we go or stay, there Jesus is near us, and waits to see whether we will at length come to ourselves, acknowledge him as our Saviour, receive him, and resign ourselves to him : ' Thou, most gracious Jesus, art ever near us ; when we seek thee thou art present with us ; thou art ever with thy people ; therefore manifest thyself at this time unto us ! O let us, therefore, seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him whilst he is near !'

3. Jesus is not only an omnipresent but also an omniscient preacher. "When he was come near, he beheld the city." This was no common look. His disciples and the people saw the city also ; but they saw it only outwardly, only the mere exterior : but Jesus saw it at the same time, according to its interior ; they beheld it in a natural manner, but Jesus, in the Spirit. Jesus beheld the city—in his

divine omniscience, he saw its inward state, the misery, the wretchedness, the corruption, the blindness, the unsusceptibility of so many thousands who were in the city. Jesus beheld all the sins, which had been committed in the city for so many centuries; Jesus saw all the blood-guiltiness which this city had heaped upon itself, by shedding the blood of so many innocent prophets. Jesus beheld in the city what wickedness would be committed in it five days afterwards, in casting out him, the Son of the Lord of the vineyard, and crucifying and slaying him. Jesus saw also the judgment of infatuation and desolation, which would come upon Jerusalem because of its many and dreadful sins. Jesus saw all this, as he beheld the city.

O my dearest friends ! Jesus with his all-seeing eyes, beholds also the place of our residence; he beholds it at the present hour. Jesus sees, according to his omniscience, what he has done for this place during so many years, and what he has done to this place, in preference to many others. Jesus sees also the wilful transgressions that are committed here; he sees the self-security, he sees the perverseness, he sees the great ingratitude of the majority of its inhabitants; he sees how, notwithstanding outward prosperity and blessing, they all become only the more hardened, and the more secure in sin. Jesus sees also according to his omniscience, what just punishment will follow upon such sins, and upon such guiltiness: either the judgment of hardness of heart, or else a desolation like that which befel Jeru-

salem, unless men repent. O that they would let themselves be advised and saved by the compassionating love of Jesus Christ to man !

Jesus beheld the city, not only in a general way, but he likewise saw, in his omniscience, all and every individual in the city in particular. And thus it is that Jesus regards me and you. He sees in what a deplorable state every heart is plunged ; he sees what sins I and each of you have committed from our youth up ; he sees the sins of omission, as well as those of commission, and places them all before the light of his countenance. Jesus beholds us ; O let us, therefore, let our hearts and the form of our hearts, be truly brought to light by the all-seeing eyes of Jesus ! He beholds us, in order that we may see ourselves, become acquainted with our need, and call upon him for mercy and assistance.

Jesus is not only a present, all-seeing, omniscient preacher, but he is likewise

4. A truly compassionate Jesus, a Saviour sincerely inclined to help. "He beheld the city *and wept over it.*" O who can say and hear this, and refrain from weeping ! Jesus wept ! Ah, these were no dissembled tears ! he wept certainly from his heart. Jesus wept over the sins and impenitence of Jerusalem. O what a great and miserable evil sin must be, for Jesus to shed tears over it ! Yes, our sins have not only pressed tears from him, but large drops of blood also in the garden of Gethsemane. O in what an important light we ought to look at sin, how grievous ought sin to appear to us ! O

let us not therefore think lightly of sin, nor look upon that as a trifle, which cost our Saviour tears, and blood, and death !

Jesus weeps indeed no longer outwardly, nor visibly before our eyes, as he did at Jerusalem ; but yet we grieve him still with our sins ; we grieve Jesus with every sin we commit, and as he formerly wept in person, so he still weeps in his members over the sins and corruption of mankind. When the true children of God look at the impenitence of men, notwithstanding all the grace which God so richly offers ; when they see the obstinacy, notwithstanding all the benefits, as well as all the judgments and punishments which God sends ; when they see the abuse of the precious name of Jesus, by those who call themselves Christians after his name, but reproach him by their anti-christian life ; when they see likewise so many impurities, deviations, and also the slothfulness and negligence of those who have obtained grace : it grieves them, it presses sighs from them, it forces tears from them, even as Paul says concerning himself (Phil. iii. 18) ; and these are not tears which proceed merely from nature : no ! they are tears which Jesus sheds through them. O my dearest friends, this is a weighty matter ! I would not like to have a single tear of our dearest Saviour, which he shed over me through his children, as a judgment upon me ; O that would be dreadful, that would be making hell hot for me !

Jesus wept also over the misery in which Jerusalem involved itself by its sins. O what a com-

passionate heart has God in Christ Jesus towards poor sinners ! The tears of Jesus sufficiently prove that God has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, that it even touches him to the heart, that his poor creature should perish ; that he so unwillingly sees how the children of men neglect the means of grace, and the precious day of grace ; that it grieves him to see how they heap upon themselves such heavy judgments notwithstanding his goodness, patience, and long suffering, and accumulate a mass of God's wrath and righteous indignation which will devour the adversaries. Ah, how very gladly would Jesus have saved the city of Jerusalem, and how gladly would he help thee and me, and every one of us ! O that we would let ourselves be induced by the tears of Jesus, to listen to him, and give his words admission into our hearts, seeing that he so ardently requests it of us, and let ourselves be saved ; as Paul says, " We beseech you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God."

II. Let us now consider *the affecting sermon* which our gracious preacher addressed to the people of Jerusalem, and what it is that he preached to them. He said, and says it still to us all, " If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, thou wouldest have considered the things that belong to thy peace." The whole contents of the gospel, the substance of all the discourses of Jesus Christ, has invariably reference to that which belongs to our peace. All that is published to us on the part of

God, ought to be serviceable to our peace. I say, to *our* peace ; for God has no need of us and our godliness ; God does not beseech us on his own account to seek peace ; Jesus needed not to weep on this occasion, as if he was in want of any thing that we could give him : O no ! all that Jesus preaches, and all that his word teaches us, belongs to our own peace, to our own well-being, and to the salvation of our own souls. Hence the Saviour does not say in a general way, the things which belong to peace, but to *thy* peace. In truth, all the words and testimonies of God are merely expressions and words of peace to our souls. Let us, therefore, attend the more earnestly, and listen the more affectionately to that which Jesus says for our peace.

Now what is the peculiar subject that we ought to consider ? What is it that our gracious and compassionate preacher of repentance desires us to do, in order that we may attain to peace ? The answer is, we must heartily repent, we must really turn from every evil way, unto Him who is ready to receive us ; this is what belongs to our peace. To true repentance belongs, first, a sincere acknowledgment and confession of sin. It is our sins that separate between us and our God ; it is on account of our sins, that the wrath of God and his displeasure impend over us ; and it is because of them that the individual carries about with him a disturbed heart and conscience ; this source of all disturbance must be removed before ever we can

enjoy peace. O soul, if thou wilt consider what belongs to thy peace, according to the address and admonition of Christ, begin by considering thy sins; how thou wast conceived and born in sin; how entirely destitute thou art of any thing good; how thou hast transgressed the holy law of God in thought, word, and deed; how thou hast not only sinned thyself, but also given offence to others by thy sins, and thus seduced them to sin and caused them to sin; how thou hast omitted doing the good which thou wast aware thou oughtest to do, and on the contrary, hast daily advanced further in sin, abused the grace of God, and wilfully perverted it. Acknowledge this, confess this, and peace shall dawn upon thy heart.

Many a one, when feeling distress of conscience on account of his sins, seeks to pacify himself by various kinds of imaginary self-righteousness, and thinks to himself, I have not, however, acted so ill as this one or that; I have not lived in gross vices and the practice of shameful things, like such and such a one; I have still much that is good in me; I live peaceably with my neighbours; am neither envious nor revengeful; give every one what belongs to him, and seek rather to be of service to people, than to do them injury; and is able to number up several other such like natural virtues. By this means the man seeks to lull to sleep again his excited conscience, and procure a peace, which however will not stand the test; this is not considering what belongs to our peace. On the contrary, we must take

the blame to ourselves in every thing, and justify ourselves in nothing. Paul was more devout than any of us ; even before conversion he had lived blamelessly : yet, notwithstanding, he gives himself the title of the greatest and the chief of sinners. Although an individual may not have committed great vices, and God have preserved him from them, yet still he has the root and source of sin in his heart. There may also be frequently in men, secret sins, secret offences against God, which in God's sight are more heinous than they appear to men to be. Sin may also be attended with certain circumstances, which may make even little sins great and important. Ah ! he that will not acknowledge his sins, but is desirous of showing himself to the best advantage, neither knows nor considers what belongs to his peace.

Another, who has been disturbed in his conscience on account of his sins, thinks, I will now act in a better manner, I will read the Bible diligently, go regularly to church, receive the sacrament, give alms to the needy, &c. Now all these things are good in themselves, they are laudable, when properly used ; but when we wish to use the works we have outwardly performed to pacify our disturbed conscience, now become tender, they avail us not, but we rather by so doing offend the most holy God. This is also not considering what belongs to our peace.

Others again, when they feel disturbed in their consciences on account of their sins, seek to procure peace to themselves, by endeavouring to turn away

their thoughts from the disturbance, under the specious pretence, that they might become much too downcast, might despair, that it might even be a temptation of the evil one. The man then seeks to divert himself in the society of others, by trifling conversation, by hearing and seeing a variety of things; in short, by a variety of amusements, to forget the disturbance of his conscience again, and expel it from his mind. This is a very erroneous consideration of what belongs to our peace; for how long would such a peace last? Should we not find it would fare with us just in the same manner, as if one should offer a puppet to a child suffering under great bodily pain, sing something to it, go with it to the window, and let it look at something; how soon does the child forget these trifling diversions, and begin to cry again, because it feels the pain, which all these things could not remove? O let every one attend to the teachings of divine grace, and seek faithfully to endure its reproofs, and obey them, in order that he may find rest and peace for his heart!

Others, it is true, are conscious of their sins, but they will not confess them; they hide and conceal them, disguise and deny them, so that they also are unable to obtain peace. Thus it once happened to a pious man, I mean the holy David. He says, "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long; for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me, my moisture is turned into the drought of summer, Selah. I acknow-

ledged my sin unto thee, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah." (Psalm xxxii. 3—5.) Thus the hiding, concealing, and being silent respecting our transgressions, gives no true peace, nay, it gives no peace at all: it causes a man to bear his burden about with him for days and years together, and torment himself with a hardened and uneasy conscience, because he will not sincerely confess his sins before God, and if needs be, before man also. "If we confess our sins, says John, (1 Ep. i. 9.) God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," and the Apostle James tells us, that we ought to acknowledge our sins to one another: "Confess your sins one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed." (James v. 16.)

Ah, it is but too often the case, that the individual must be roused and impelled by the stern voice of death, to confess his sins which he has so long covered and concealed, in order that he may obtain peace. Then something often comes to light which was hidden and had long lain concealed in the evil heart. The individual then says, "I have done this or that, if I could only rid my heart of that, I could die quietly!" What can it avail us to cover and conceal our sins! Jesus sees them, Jesus knows them notwithstanding. Is it not better now to look at the catalogue of our sins, now to confess our sins, than to wait with them till we are laid upon a sick

bed, or even postpone it to the great day of judgment? Is it not better *voluntarily* to confess our sins, than to compel God, as it were, to put us to pain, and lay us upon the rack, in order that he may only get the words out of our mouths, "I am a sinner, I have deserved hell and merited eternal damnation!" O confess your sins voluntarily and willingly before your God and Saviour; honestly tell him in what you have sinned against him, nor hesitate to make a sincere confession before him! Nor ought you to be ashamed of confessing your sins before those, whom you have offended by your sins, and to whom you have set a bad example by your sins. Let each confess to the other his sin, wherein he may have particularly offended, calumniated, circumvented, prejudiced or injured, or caused him any other sorrow.

I cannot omit to mention, what I have myself frequently experienced, that persons who were on their death-beds, and had certain sins on their consciences, but would not humble themselves and divulge them, lay in great distress and disturbance, and no one knew that it was distress of conscience; but as soon as they had open-heartedly told and humbly confessed what oppressed them, they were at ease, they obtained peace of heart, and a free access to grace. O, my friends, do not carry your load of sins so secretly! Let us confess our sins; let us no longer torment, hate, and stand so opposed to our own souls, as to be willing always to conceal and be silent respecting our sins; but let us consider what belongs to our peace.

Observe, however, that when we acknowledge and confess our sins, it must be done in a proper manner; the confession must be united with true repentance, a heartfelt sorrow, and a contrition and brokenness of heart. The mere saying, "We are all sinful mortals," is not the true acknowledgment and confession of sin; the superficial and frigid thinking to ourselves, "I am sorry that I have sinned, that I have done this or that," is not true repentance. And if thou art truly sorry for it, examine thyself well, why thou art sorry, why thou repentest of having sinned. Art thou sorry merely because thou hast degraded thyself with thy sins before the world and mankind—because thou hast injured thy body or thy property by an irregular course of life? Art thou sorry merely because thou art punished on account of thy sins?—all this is not true repentance; such a repentance is of no avail in the sight of God. Thou must be sorry, heartily sorry for having sinned, only because thou hast with thy sins and thy transgressions offended thy God, the great, the holy, and righteous God, and hast grieved thy faithful Saviour who loves thee so cordially. This ought to grieve thee; this ought to pierce thee to the heart; this ought deeply to pain thee; to cause thee tribulation and anguish, and impel thee to abhor thyself and sin, and acknowledge thyself worthy of damnation. It is of this nature that our sorrow and repentance ought to be, and from hence that it must arise.

But if our sorrow and repentance, and if the distress we feel is to be beneficial to us, and to make

for our peace : they must impel us at the same time to Jesus, so that we take refuge solely and wholly in him, who alone can blot them out, and who alone can save us from our sins. A believing recourse to Jesus, promotes our peace, and enables us to attain peace. Many a man is very conscious of his sins, and confesses his sins, and even grieves on account of his sins ; but he is frequently deficient in taking refuge with Jesus. Many a one keeps his eye fixed only constantly on the bundle of his sins ; he sees the burden, the wretchedness, and the misery of them ; he complains, and continues complaining, and still does not take refuge with Jesus. Nay, whilst thus continually complaining, he again becomes slothful ; the impression, the anxiety, and distress at length passes away ; the man then still complains with the mouth in a listless manner, and no amendment is perceived. O this does not belong to our peace, we must hasten with our sins to Jesus, otherwise we shall find no peace!

Many a one seeks to comfort himself with the sorrow which he has once endured on account of his sins, and says to himself, "at such and such a time I was so affected, so moved, that I even shed tears." And then consoles himself with the idea, that he is no longer a natural man. But though it is well, beloved soul, that thou hast been alarmed, yet has thy alarm, have thy sins driven thee to Jesus? If not, it avails thee nothing. Being grieved and distressed on account of our sins is nothing meritorious ; I cannot carry this to account ; this is insuf-

ficient of itself to afford me peace. My mere weeping, alarm, and grief avails me not ; in order that it may make for my peace, I must take refuge with Jesus, who can alone blot out my sins. Only Jesus, Jesus and his blood can benefit me.

O let no one suffer himself to be deterred by the multitude and greatness of his sins, and be restrained thereby from having recourse to Jesus ! Jesus by the shedding of his blood, has accomplished a perfect atonement for the sins of the whole world. Now, if any one had committed all the sins which have ever been or are still committed by the greatest sinner, he ought not on that account to despond and despair, nor let himself be deterred from taking refuge with Jesus ; for the blood of Jesus is more than sufficient for the atonement and forgiveness of his sins. Hasten therefore to Jesus, ye penitent hearts ! Hear how our dearest Saviour calls to you : “ Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, I will receive you ; in me alone will you find rest and peace for your souls ; you can find it no where else.”

We must not, however, have recourse to Jesus in such a manner as to remain in self-security, and merely superficially think Christ has paid my ransom, the blood of Christ is the atonement for all my sins ; and thus appropriate it to ourselves merely in idea : O no, dear friends, this will not do ; this is not the refuge, which brings us peace ! Taking refuge presupposes a feeling of necessity, the sight of danger, from which the individual cannot save or

deliver himself, and therefore he seeks help and protection from some other quarter, from some one in whom we have confidence, that he is able to aid and assist us, that he is willing to help us, and upon whom we can depend, that he will also do it. The nearer we are to such help and protection, the sooner we can receive assistance. Now the feeling of our necessity, the sight of the extreme danger of our souls must exist in us, before we look about for a refuge ; and then it is, that we must flee to Jesus. Who else can help us but Jesus ? Who is more willing to help than Jesus ? And who is nearer to us than Jesus ? Every poor and penitent heart, therefore, ought to turn away its appetite and desire from all its sins and all its wretchedness, and fix it on the grace which is so near to it, on Jesus who is so intimately present ; upon that love, that abyss of love which is open to us, and brought so near to us in Jesus, saying, " O Lord Jesus ! have compassion upon me ! O set my heart at rest ! let my sins be blotted out by thy blood. O let me find favour in thy blood !" We must then not grow weary in inwardly hungering, groaning, and longing after Jesus, and for grace and mercy. And when Jesus should even appear to act as a stranger towards us, and as if he would not hear us and deliver us from our distress, we must only persevere, like the Canaanitish woman, and continue steadfast ; our dear Saviour cannot refrain, he will certainly help us, and grant us every thing that belongs to our peace. Jesus, who drew near to us, even whilst we were

still impenitent, will much more draw near to us and come to meet us, like the father of the prodigal son did, when we approach with true penitence to him. O let us, therefore, be of good courage, and place a perfect confidence in our Jesus! If he has revealed to us the danger of our souls, and given us a desire for deliverance; if he has invited us to come to him and seek help from him; he will also grant us his aid. His heart will melt, so that he must have mercy upon us. (Jer. xxxi. 20.) He will say to our hearts, "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace!" Our hearts will then be pacified, and may continue at ease and in peace.

But we must not only take refuge in Jesus in our first and elementary repentance; we must also do so in the progress and whole course of our Christian life, if we are desirous of attending to the things that belong to our peace. We must then continually cleave to Jesus, and in all the storms of the temptations and assaults of the world, of our own flesh and blood, and of Satan, flee to Jesus alone, and conceal ourselves in him and his protection as in a sure fortress. Yes, we must abide in Jesus, and in real humility depend continually upon his grace, in the consciousness of our own inability. As soon as an individual imagines in the smallest degree, that he is any thing, has any thing, can do something, is far advanced, and the like: he then falls out of his fortress, and loses his peace; for God resisteth the proud; and if God resist us, we

are then no longer in a state of peace with God. Hence it happens, that God is constrained occasionally to lead souls that are dear to him, and who often possess much grace, into various kinds of barrenness, trials, and temptations; only that they may again become little, that they may be conscious that they can only live by grace, and can have peace alone in Jesus. If we are not in Jesus, but in ourselves, and suppose we are great people: let us then remember the warning, 1 Cor. x. 12. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall!" that he do not lose his peace, and that distress and uneasiness overtake him. We must be found in Jesus, who is our peace (Ephes. ii. 14), and in whom Paul sought to be found (Phil. iii. 9), and to be found in this manner more and more, go out of ourselves and enter into Christ more and more, and be ever less, and more empty of self, in order that Jesus may become all in all to us. Being thus little, brings us peace in life and in death. Little in ourselves—great in Jesus; naked and destitute in ourselves—beautiful and glorious in Jesus.

What is there besides, that belongs to our peace? The daily mortification of ourselves, and the denial of the world and its vanities. The Jews were vain in their imaginations, and looked only for an earthly and worldly Messiah, who should redeem them from the Roman yoke, and make them a people who superabounded in natural things, who could outwardly indeed attend to their temple service, but could live at the same time in all affluence, abundance, and

splendour ; such a Messiah did they expect : Jesus, the true Messiah, in his humble form, was not at all to their taste, and his discourses upon self-denial, the renunciation of all things, the taking up the cross and following him did not please them at all ; no ! he could never be the Messiah ! And thus it is still with many Christians. They are willing to be outwardly pious, they are willing outwardly to serve God : but they refuse to enter upon a renouncement of the world, and the denial of themselves ; with all their piety, they continue to be avaricious, covetous, lovers of the world, seek to gain something in the world, and become people of property ; and this they call the blessing of God, and say, ‘ this hath God given me,’ this they are unwilling to forsake and deny, or to give their tender natures pain. Well, this belongs to the peace of nature, to the gratification of flesh and blood, but not to thorough tranquillity and true peace of heart, nor to peace of conscience. Let him that will have a religion with which he can keep the world at the same time, make the attempt, and see whether it brings peace to him. Christ however says “ No man can serve two masters.”

. Many at their first conversion, fall into mistakes respecting it. They think, because they now intend to be pious, and to live and walk otherwise than before, no one must lay any obstruction in their way ; no one must hinder them in their being pious, in their reading, praying, in their devotions, and in their other good things ; no one must now oppose them, no one

confuse them, no one do any thing to them against their will ; if this is not the case, they complain that they have so many obstructions, hindrances, and disturbances ; although there is nothing that can disturb or hinder them, but their own instability, and that they will not deny themselves ; hence it is that they can find no peace. Such like characters then fall upon a variety of plans ; they think this must be altered, and that must be changed ; they would gladly be in some other situation, in other outward circumstances, at one time in this, and at another in some other place ; if it were with them they think, as with this person or that, they would have peace. No, my friends ! it is not change of place or circumstances that gives us peace ; but the denying ourselves, and the uniting our will with God's will, gives peace ; the renouncing the world gives peace ; such is the true state of the case. Or what shall we make of the precious words of our Saviour, when he says : " He that does not forsake all that he hath, cannot be my disciple ; if any man will follow me, let him deny himself." I say, what shall we make of such expressions, if we imagine every thing must go according to our ideas and convenience ? We ought, therefore, to let ourselves be led into a denial of the world and ourselves.

I speak of an evangelical renunciation, of the world and self, not of a legal one, which is done as it were by compulsion, which is required of us from our own strength, and with which we expect to merit something : O no ! Jesus does not require of us self-

denial in such a manner or for such a purpose ; we require it, nor do we or can we merit any thing by our self-denial ; by no means ; but it is the indispensable and necessary way by which we may attain true peace and fellowship with God ; otherwise we cannot attain it. Jesus, who requires of us self-denial in an evangelical manner, will lead us into it, and give us also the strength for it. He not only sees how our hearts are attached to some particular object, how we still have so many things beside him, and do not consider what belongs to our peace, but also, that we cannot help ourselves or set ourselves at liberty ; this excites his compassion, and from heartfelt pity, he is willing by his precepts and assistance, to help us in forsaking them, that we may attain to the things that belong to the peace of our souls.

At our conversion, we joined ourselves to Jesus as our bridegroom ; we must therefore no more give ear to any rival, for this would disturb our peace. If we wish to live in peace with our precious Saviour, we must empty our hearts for him alone, and avoid every thing that is contrary to him, and on every occasion, pay attention to his inward admonitions respecting the denial of ourselves, in whatever it be, that we are displeasing to him, and by which our peace with him might be disturbed. Not all that is termed no sin, is on that account pleasing to the Saviour or harmless to us ; we must lay aside every thing, not only open sins, but generally, every thing that cannot consist with union with our

sweetest Jesus ; consequently all attachment of our hearts to earthly things, to the honours of this world, to the things of this world, and to the conveniences of this life, for it is this that causes us disturbance, and prevents us from living in heartfelt peace with our Saviour Jesus. Hence our dear Saviour admonishes us to renounce all these things. All that to which we are still unmortified in ourselves, our affections, our self-will, self-love, disposition to anger, hatred, envy, and the like, however secretly they may be cherished, all that to which the man is still unmortified, which hinders his peace, and prevents him from living quietly, notwithstanding all his piety, we must yield up to death.

O if we attended thus to Jesus in our hearts, how evangelically would he preach to us of a truly evangelical renunciation of self and the world ! With his gracious lips he would speak to us, as one friend to another, and say, " Dear soul, thou art well aware that this pains my heart, wilt thou still cleave to other things ? I am thine, I am thy bridegroom, I am the joy of thy heart ; therefore do not cleave to any other." And with respect to the denial of ourselves, our affections and passions, for instance, anger, our gracious preacher would speak to us and say, " Subdue thyself, thou knowest how meek I am ; I could have crushed Jerusalem, but nevertheless, I came and wept over it from sympathy ; thus thou must also have a lamb-like heart." To be brief ; our gracious Saviour by his inward teaching, would graciously, kindly, and whilst imparting

strength, call us away from all that prevents our peace, and we should in reality experience, that the renunciation of which we form such a terrific idea, and let others persuade us to that effect, is something very sweet and soothing, and brings peace and repose to our souls. Ah, Jesus is kindly disposed towards us ; he does not wish to embitter our days ; he seeks to give us real peace, and a truly happy heart : let us only empty our hearts for him, that he may establish them in real and blissful peace.

Alas, that amongst called and awakened souls, there should still be so much complaining and so little true peace to be found, although they so much desire it ! The reason is, because we do not sufficiently yield up every thing for it ; we do not let Jesus become our all ; we still dissemble secretly with the world ; we still secretly cleave to some particular object, and in this way we cannot be otherwise than restless and disturbed. Our conscience, indeed, does not permit us to cleave to the world and sin in an obvious manner ; but subtleties and secret bands hinder us notwithstanding, from attaining to a thorough and permanent peace ; what a miserable life !

Lastly ; inward acquaintance and union with Jesus, our precious Saviour, belongs to our peace, and to the real establishment of our peace. The Jews had an outward temple, where God dwelt visibly in the most holy place ; of this they were proud, this was their glory ; they then called out, ‘ Here is the

Lord's temple ! Here is the Lord's temple !' and it was certainly something distinguishing, great, and excellent ; but God's intention in it was, that it should be only a typical representation and an instruction to them, that God himself would dwell in their hearts and walk in them ; that they were again to be united with God himself, through Christ the Messiah, and their hearts become a sanctuary. Ah, my dearest friends ! how little it is recognized, how little believed, and still less experienced, what great and holy intentions God has respecting us poor mortals ! We are again to become a habitation of God, and to be united with God. Our immortal spirit is created for God, and cannot be at rest until it is again united with God through Christ ; it cannot rest so long as it hangs between heaven and earth, and does not again seek and find its repose and real life in God himself. Can a child rest, that has strayed from its mother, and walks alone in the desert ? But no child can so belong to its mother, or the mother to the child, as our spirit belongs to God. Can a fish live out of the water, which is its element ? God is the element of our souls ; here in the world, in created things, there is no rest or pleasure for our immortal spirits. For we are not created for this world ; we cannot find peace in it, our spirits cannot attain to peace. We must again have our God, and we can have him again. Jesus for this purpose came down from heaven ; Jesus is come to us ; he desires to make us again acquainted with our God,

he seeks to reclaim the poor lost child, and bring it into real acquaintance with God, into union with our gracious and blessed God, in order that we may have peace to all eternity.

O that we might only cleave more to God and our Saviour in inward and heartfelt prayer, and devote this opportunity for the purpose of heartily entreating God, that in order to this, he would grant us his grace and Spirit! It is by omitting prayer, that we go astray from our hearts, and at the same time from God; and the further we go from God, the further do we depart from our peace. O soul, consider therefore what belongs to thy peace! If we loved prayer more, and practised it more, my dear friends! we should become capable of experiencing the peace of the precious love of Jesus in our interior, in our centre, and become more closely united to him. O, Jesus is so near us, the precious Saviour! ought we not therefore to draw near unto him, and withdraw our hearts from all created things, from all distraction, from all multiplicity of thoughts concerning outward and earthly things, and with all the devotion of our hearts and our affections retire into Jesus in our inmost souls? By the continual drawing near to Jesus in our hearts, by a believing adherence to him, in which consists the true prayer of the heart, we attain to an ever closer union with him, and peace becomes great in our souls; yea, it becomes at length an invincible peace, which nothing can take away. O what a peace! O how every burden and difficulty

then falls away ! And although we may not attain to so high a degree of union as that to which many souls, by divine grace, attain in this life ; yet still, the soul that loves prayer and inward retirement, that abides much with God in the heart, will be conscious of such a secret well-being, and such a tranquillity, as it never can find or possess in the world, or created things.

Let us consider what belongs to our peace, in order that we may have peace when we must pass over into an endless eternity. Why are people so much afraid of eternity ? Why are even many pious people so timid, so terrified—why is there often so much distress and sorrow, when called to die ? For this reason ; because the individual has had so little intercourse with God, because he is so little united with God, because he is still so far from God, and *because eternity is so little known to him*. If we were properly acquainted with God ; if we realized eternity here, so as to dwell in it as in our home, and were already in our hearts, citizens and inhabitants of heaven, we should say, like old Simeon with joy, “ Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.” Death would not be dreadful to us ; it would be a desirable messenger of peace, by whom we should be translated into an eternal state of repose, and into eternal peace.

Further, our dear Saviour adds, “ In this thy day ; ”—if thou hadst known, thou wouldst have considered in this thy day, what belongs to thy peace. God has appointed to every one his time

and his day ; and the lifetime of every individual, is his time of consideration, which God gives him : it is a time which at length ceases. There have been people before us, who have had their day, their day of life, their time for consideration ; it is now over with them, they cannot any more consider that which they ought to have considered. We have now our day and the present opportunity, and perhaps a few days more, in which we may still attend to what belongs to our peace. O important season, in which we may still consider what belongs to our peace ! The Jews had only five days longer, as we have already mentioned ; their day was then past ; they then committed the heinous sin of nailing Christ himself to the cross, and brought upon themselves the heavy judgment of judicial hardness and the consequent desolation. Who can tell us, my dear friends, how long our time of grace, our time of consideration will last ? How long the patience of God will still grant us time for amendment ? Who will assure us, that we shall live to see such another opportunity ? This may be the last to some now present. O let us therefore consider on this occasion, in this our day, what belongs to our peace, whilst we still possess time for consideration, the time of our gracious visitation, and are still in a situation to be able to consider it ! O how many a one will consider it, when lying on his death-bed, when ability is wanting, when understanding fails, when time is wanting, and who knows, whether grace may not also be wanting, which has been so long despised, so often rejected, so often

spurned! We ought therefore to consider it whilst God still offers his grace to us. "To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." (Heb. iii. 7, 8.)

The Lord finally adds with grief, "But now it is hid from thine eyes!" O melancholy word! Our dearest Saviour means to say, 'I may preach, I may do wonders, I may kindly allure, I may sincerely threaten, but it is all in vain; thou takest it not to heart, it is all hidden from thine eyes. It is hidden from thine eyes, what heinous sins are accumulated on thy head; it is hidden from thine eyes that grace is offered thee, which thou mightest still receive; it is hidden from thine eyes, the heavy judgment of judicial hardness, the judgment of desolation; it is all hidden from thine eyes; for thou wilfully closest thine eyes, stoppest thine ears, and wilt not hear; thou hardenest thine heart, and wilt not receive it. O lamentable state, from which may God in mercy preserve us!

III.—O let every one therefore think so much the more of himself and of his own heart; let every one examine himself in the presence of Him, whose eyes are a flame of fire, in the presence of the all-seeing God, how it stands with him, and make the requisite application and appropriation to himself of all that we have now said! Let no one think that this sermon of Christ was intended only for Jerusalem and the Jewish people, or that some one else was meant at present and not he himself. O no!—the words,—"*if thou knowest,*" have reference to us all,

and to each in particular, as it is said—even thou ! Even thou therefore, whoever thou art, even thou art meant, when the Saviour says, “ If thou hadst known in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace ! ”

It is not mere knowledge in which many of us are deficient. We have been instructed from our youth up in the word of God ; we have read the Bible, we have heard so many sermons, attended so many meetings, and have associated with the pious, so that we are able to speak much of religion, of godliness, and divine things, and manifest great knowledge ; but do we know as we ought to know ? Do we know so as to consider at the same time, what belongs to our peace ? Have we experienced it in our hearts, or have we it only from reading and hearsay, and are, with all this, still ignorant of our inward state ? O my friends ! let us consider what belongs to our peace ! Those are not pronounced blessed, who know, but those who do. O how great will be our responsibility for having known the will of the Lord, and not done it ; for having taken his covenant into our lips, and yet hated reproof ; for having so often called God our Father, and yet not honoured him in our hearts ; for having called him Lord, and yet not feared him in reality ! Will it avail us at that day, that we have possessed an outward piety, a specious holiness ? Will it avail us then to rely upon our outward religion, in which we have been born and bred, upon our going to church and sacrament, and such like merely external works ?

Could not the Jews, as we have been hearing, with respect to their divine service, do the same? Were they not at the same time, children of Abraham? Were they not chosen to be a peculiar people? And yet notwithstanding all this, they were an abomination before God. Will not even many say, on that day, Lord! Lord! have we not prophesied in thy name,—have we not cast out devils in thy name, and in thy name done many wonderful works? To whom the Saviour will say, “I never knew you, depart from me ye workers of iniquity!” O that the Saviour might not have to lament over us, as he did over Jerusalem, “How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”—Well, what says the Saviour further? “Behold your house—your temple, which is no longer my house, my temple, because, instead of a house of prayer, ye have made it a den of thieves—is left unto you desolate?” O might not the same thing happen to us? Might not the Lord take away the candlestick of the gospel from us, because we do not walk in its light, because we will not accept the message of peace? Therefore let us reflect what belongs to our peace, and not continue longer in false security with our knowledge, but humble ourselves before him, who is now willing to come to us as a lowly monarch, as a king of peace, in order to make us happy subjects of his kingdom. Let us therefore submit and resign ourselves to him by a true and thorough conversion of the heart, and let ourselves

be induced by the tears which he has shed, by the compassion with which he regards even us, and by the patience with which he still bears with us, to listen to this most gracious preacher of repentance, and obey his voice.

But do those amongst us also consider what belongs to their peace, who experience the operations of grace in their hearts, arousing them from their state of security? There are many, who have been moved and affected; they are convinced that all is not right with them; they are convinced that in their present state, they cannot be saved, they are therefore uneasy, they have been disturbed in their natural peace, in their previous security; but they have so many scruples, and do not resolutely follow reproving grace, and the demands of the good Spirit in their hearts; they delay from day to day, and from time to time, to resign themselves to Jesus. They let themselves be restrained by a variety of rational reflections, by their worldly-minded relations, friends, and acquaintances, by fear of contempt, the loss of temporal advantages, or this or that vain delight. O my friends, do consider what belongs to your peace! Is that which is transitory of more importance to you than that which endureth for ever? Is peace with the vain world of more value to you than peace with God? Are those more estimable to you, who can give no peace, because they have none themselves, according to Isa. xlviii. 22, than He, who can bless you with true peace of heart, who can give you eternal peace? How long will it last with the peace

which you have with the world? How long will the friendship continue, which you are so afraid to lose? To-day an individual loves us; to-morrow he hates us; to-day he is a friend, to-morrow a foe; and who for the sake of such an unstable, and at the same time dangerous friendship, for the sake of a peace which is no peace, would deprive himself of the most blissful friendship of Jesus, and rob himself of eternal and infinite felicity? What matters the calumnies, the blasphemies, the opprobrious epithets of unconverted people, that you should let yourselves be restrained by them? Would he not be regarded as foolish, who knew how to obtain a great treasure, or some other important advantage, but let it alone, because thoughtless people stood in the way, who laughed at him, ridiculed him, and called him all sorts of by-names? But what are all worldly possessions, what are all worldly treasures, what is all worldly honour and glory compared with the great possession, the great treasure, and the great glory which we can obtain in heaven, nay, even here upon earth in Jesus!

There are others also who have really entered upon the way of peace by having commenced their conversion, but who, alas! have again departed from it, and with Demas, have again become attached to the present world—that had escaped the corruptions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but let themselves be again involved in it, of whom Peter says, “It were better for them not to have known the way of

righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment which was given them," 2 Pet. ii. 21. O how much it is to be feared, that with them the last will be worse than the first, and that it will fare with them, as with many who, on Christ's entry into Jerusalem, cried out "Hosannah" with the rest, but in a few days, let themselves be excited to cry out, to their temporal and eternal judgment, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" so that instead of confessors, they were persecutors of the truth. May Jesus, the compassionate preacher of repentance, have mercy also upon them; and guide these poor souls again aright, that they may consider what belongs to their peace, and again tread the way of peace which they had forsaken!

Well, God be praised, that there are still some amongst us, whose eyes the Lord has not only opened, so that their danger is no longer hidden from them, and they have considered what belongs to their peace; but who also continue to walk in the way of peace. O my dearest friends, still seek, through the divine assistance, that peace, which you sought at your conversion, at your change of heart, and have, through divine mercy, attained and experienced: still seek faithfully to preserve this precious peace; seek to increase it by ever closer connection with your Saviour, and to establish it by your more intimate union with him. To this end, go cheerfully forward on the blessed path of self-denial and mortification, in order to penetrate the more fully into fellowship with Jesus. Never cast away your con-

fidence in him, but in all your affairs take refuge with him, who is our help and our defence. Let us not be weary in all the afflictions which may befall us for Christ's sake. If we are ridiculed, despised, and calumniated here; does it fare hardly and laboriously with us in the world; yets till, we have Jesus in our hearts, whom no one can take from us, and his grace and his peace still continues with us. Soon, very soon shall we make our entrance with Jesus into the upper Jerusalem. When our dear Saviour made his entrance here into Jerusalem, the people came to meet him, with palm branches in their hands, and the disciples stripped themselves of their garments, and placed Jesus upon them. There, a host, that no man can number, will also bear palms of victory in their hands; and those who have here stripped themselves of the garments of their own righteousness, and submitted themselves to Jesus, shall there be clothed in white raiment, and shine, in regal splendour, before the throne of God and the Lamb; "God will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and the Lamb shall feed them and guide them to living fountains of water." They will then joyfully and triumphantly sing, at their entrance into the glorious city of God, and into the heavenly Jerusalem:

The new Jerusalem appears,
Her citizens resplendent shine;
For God hath wiped away their tears,
And filled them with the life divine.

With them we shall his glory see,
And praise him through eternity.

Amen ! “ Hosannah ! Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord ! Hosannah in the highest ! ”

PRAYER.

O Lord Jesus, before whose face the heavenly host of angels and glorified spirits fall down and worship ! O Son of God Most High, we also bow beofre thee, and acknowledge thee as our only Saviour, as our God and King. Our hearts and all that is within us, thank thee for thy love, long suffering, and patience, in which thou hast been so gracious to us, both as it respects body and soul even to this day, and hast exercised such forbearance towards us, hast not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

Thanks be to thy goodness, for having blessed us with so many temporal favours during the last three months. Thou hast granted us an abundant harvest, and hast given richly of thy bounty to many. O Lord Jesus, let not this thy blessing become a curse, through ingratitude ! Let it not be spent upon their lusts, but applied to the purposes for which thou hast given it, that thy goodness may be recognized, and that thou, the giver, may be loved : let not our hearts cleave to the gifts, but may they be used in abstraction of heart, and for the purpose of supplying

the wants of the poor and needy, as those who have to give an account to thee.

Thanks be unto thee also for the grace vouchsafed to our souls. O how many warnings, salutary admonitions, and precious doctrines hast thou vouchsafed to us! O Lord Jesus, let them all become truth and reality in hearts, even that also which has now, though with much infirmity, been brought before us. O that it may tend to the edification and salvation of all, and not unto condemnation! Thanks be to thee for all the good thoughts, desires, and feelings thou hast hitherto afforded unto many. O Lord Jesus, let abiding fruit result from it all, which may eternally serve for thy glorification!

O Lord Jesus! we have heard how much it belongs to our peace, to lay our sins open before thee and confess them with a sincere repentance. Yea, Lord, we have all sinned, even such as have been awakened and called to be thy people. O how frequently have we grieved thee and the hearts of thy children by our slothfulness and thoughtlessness! Graciously forgive it, O Lord Jesus! We desire on this day of fasting and prayer, to devote ourselves to thee anew, to cleave to thee more faithfully, to walk more worthy of thy grace and of our high vocation, as long as we live here upon earth, that we may at length blissfully reach the end of our course.

We commend unto thee, O Lord, the government under which we live; that those in office may be ruled by thy Spirit, and actuated by thy wisdom for

the promotion of thy glory, and the peace and welfare of their subjects. Thou hast hitherto spared us, and hast had patience notwithstanding all those grievous offences by which thou mightest have been induced to deprive us of every temporal and spiritual blessing, and visit us with thy judgments. O Lord Jesus, mercifully bear with us still further, and let not the favour thou hast hitherto shown to this country be removed from us, nor the preaching of thy gospel withdrawn, that it may at length yield the desired fruit.

Bless all the pastors and teachers, who sincerely seek the welfare of thy Zion; but root out of thy church all mercenaries and hirelings who may stand in the way of thy work, or graciously convert them. Bless, O Jesus! thy church upon earth, the little flock of thy believing people, let them be safe under thy protection, and may they become increasingly enlightened, glorious, holy, and perfect. Bless in particular the whole of this parish. O that thy word, the word of peace, which thou art so willing to bestow upon all, may find increasing place in their hearts, that the number of those may be augmented, who know the things that belong to their peace! Have compassion on the weak and the wavering, the lukewarm and slothful amongst us. O awake them to consider what belongs to their peace, to walk more correctly, and prosecute their course more actively. O Lord, bless all that dwell in our vicinity, and our friends and relations! Let them all be favourably regarded by thee, operated upon by thy

grace, prepared to become thy children, and beautified with thy peace !

Now, O Lord Jesus ! let thy grace rest upon us, and thy Spirit not depart from our hearts, till thy work is accomplished to the glory of thy name. Extend thy kingdom amongst us, and to the ends of the earth. O let Hosannahs resound unto thee, not only from one and another in secret, but do enter into many a heart, as thou wilt do into thy kingdom in the end of time, that thou mayest be known and glorified by every nation upon earth, as their sole hope and salvation, and that at length an eternal Hallelujah ! may ascend unto thee.

Hear us according to thy great mercy for thy name's sake. Amen.

THE BELIEVER THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

This house is set apart for the purposes of edification; but, my God! how much is requisite for this purpose! It is first of all requisite, that we possess hearts desirous of edification, and seriously seek to acquire them from the Lord our God. Next, that we be powerfully convinced, that no individual can teach and edify another, without the grace of God and the co-operation of his Spirit. Let us therefore turn at this time to the Lord Jesus, our dearest Saviour, and mighty prophet, and most humbly entreat him to enter into our midst, instruct us, enlighten and warm our hearts, and establish us in his truth.

PRAYER.

O Lord Jesus Christ, thou Son of the Most High God! we thank thee, that through thy gracious condescension, we may venture to approach unto thee. O may it be in spirit and in truth! O Jesu! Jesu! thou most lovely name! thou name, in which the delight of our souls, the consolation of our hearts, and their beauty and excellency is alone to be found! Thou name, which angels reverence and adore,

before which, at this very moment, the choirs and hosts in glory above, are prostrating themselves. O touch our hearts by thy Holy Spirit, that in our inmost souls we may know thee as great and adorable, and that our hearts, with all the blest above, may bow themselves in thee, thou saving name!

O Lord Jesus Christ, we have to thank thee alone, that we still exist, and that we have been spared and preserved unto the present hour! Thanks be to thee, O Jesus! that by thy precious blood, thou hast wrought out and brought in such an everlasting righteousness for us! Grant us grace, that we may become duly acquainted with it during the present life! But grant us also an eternity, in which we may eternally adore, worship, and thank thee and thy grace, thee and thy name, and the power of thy divine love! We have also to thank thee alone, O Jesus! thee the great Shepherd and teacher of thy church, for having assembled us together here at this time. Thou hast gathered us together outwardly: O collect us also inwardly! Collect our hearts, collect the hunger and desires of our hearts! Yea, turn our hearts to thee, O Lord! and detach our senses from earthly things, that they may not go astray from thee. Favour us, O Lord Jesus! with thine enlightening, and thy blissful presence, at this time. Thou hast promised, that "where two or three are gathered together in thy name, there thou wilt be in the midst of them." Make it, therefore, manifest, O Jesus! that thou art in our midst, by the powerful operation of thy Spirit,

as a present and beatifying Saviour. O put thy word into the heart and mouth of those who are to speak, that nothing may be spoken but what is pleasing and acceptable to thee ! Accompany likewise thy word, O Lord Jesus ! with the power of thy Divine Spirit, and let it be taken deeply to heart by each and every one, that the hearts of all may be as a well-prepared soil and field, in which thy word, as good seed, shall take root, spring up gloriously, and bring forth fruit an hundredfold, to the glory of thy name ! Remember, dearest Saviour, thy bitter sufferings, thy agony and bloody sweat. Remember thy death on the cross, and all the woe thou hast endured ; was it not for immortal souls ; was it not endured also for the benefit of the souls of those here present ? O let thy grace, therefore, be poured out upon us ! Let our souls be precious in thy most holy sight, that we may be powerfully affected and inflamed by thee, and drawn to thee. Dearest Immanuel ! glorify thyself and thy word in our hearts ! O that thou mightest become every day dearer, every day greater, and every day more adorable in our esteem !

Now, Lord Jesus ! thou knowest me, thou knowest the hearts of all present, thou knowest how every heart is constituted, in its interior, in thy sight. O cast a look into our inmost souls, and have compassion upon thy people, that they may obtain some crumbs of grace, each according to his need. Have mercy upon us all, and bless us ! Amen.

The words, which will form the subject of our consideration at present, stand written in

1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

“ Know ye not, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.”

SATAN, the subtle enemy of our souls, is always intent upon recommending his deceitful wares, and, on the contrary, upon making godliness suspected in the sight of men. On which account he represents true religion as a base, miserable, and utterly despicable matter. The children of God, indeed, appear outwardly the meanest of men, a spectacle to angels, an abomination to the world, and a despised people. But, O! how would any one, who possessed real eyes of faith, be astonished at their inward beauty, excellence, and glory, in which they shine in the sight of God and enlightened men! The enemy of our souls, as well as the rude multitude, exclaim against religion as mere hypocrisy, and abuse, to this end, the Gospel itself. The pious are then looked upon as highminded Pharisees, who seek to appear better than others, whilst those, who have no desire to amend themselves, and take no pleasure in godliness, willingly continue poor sinners, and pretend that true godliness is self-righteousness. To which must be added also, that with their reason and their evil eye, they pay most minute attention to the faults of those who are devoted to godliness.

Hypocrisy is an abomination before God, and no

mere appearance of sanctity can exist before him ; but he that regards and considers godliness, not as a mere work of nature, but as a work of the Holy Spirit, is never guilty of hypocrisy and counterfeit holiness, but all is truth with him, and reality in Christ Jesus. True godliness, as well as true and perfect virtue is to be found no where else, but with those, who are found true Christians in Christ.

The subtle deceiver, the Devil, represents godliness also as a melancholy, gloomy, and vexatious life, in which it is impossible to have a happy hour, but the individual must always hang down his head, torment himself, and make his life very bitter. Now it is certainly true, that those, whose eyes God opens to perceive and feel the burden of their sins, by true repentance, grieve and mourn ; but this is a sorrow according to God, a repentance, which no one repents of. But after this sorrow, and their subsequent sufferings, there follows a thorough and most inward consolation. O, he who could have seen into the hearts of these mourners before their conversion, would have been convinced, that before they were reconciled unto God in Christ they had never enjoyed a really happy hour. In short, true godliness is a holy, glorious, and complete state, which alone can cause us true delight.

We will endeavour to investigate this more closely, in the consideration of the words of our text, in which is presented to our consideration,

The glorious state of godliness of a true Christian ; which leads us to consider,

I. The high dignity of a true Christian ;

II. The great obligation of a true Christian ; and then,

III. The well-founded and unshaken consolation of a true Christian.

If I were asked wherein the greatest dignity of a Christian man consists, I would answer, with the apostle Paul, in this : that he is not his own, but bought with the blood of Christ ; that he is God's, and no others. If I were asked what is the most important and obligatory basis of that which is incumbent upon a Christian, I would again reply, this : that a Christian is not his own, but God's. If I were asked further, wherein consists the real and immutable consolation of a Christian man, I would repeat the above reply, and say, ' It consists in this, that a Christian is not his own, but God's, being bought by Christ Jesus.

I. — A man, a Christian man, is not his own, but God's :

1. According to the right of creation ;

2. According to the right of redemption ;

3. According to the right of presentation ; and

4. According to the right of possession.

First. Man is not his own, but God's, according to the right of creation. God hath made body and soul, and not we ourselves. Not an atom is our own ; we belong, by the right of creation, entirely to our Creator. It is, therefore, the most evident injustice, the most abominable outrage, nay, the

most dreadful and criminal sin, when we resign ourselves, whether in body or soul, to any thing else than to our God; when we devote and offer ourselves up to another besides him, who hath made us, and whose workmanship we are; to whom alone we owe our thanks for all that we have and are, whom we ought therefore alone to serve, and whom we are under supreme obligation alone to love, praise, honour, admire, and adore.

Indeed, the whole world, with all that is therein, is God's, according to the right of creation; but man is so in a peculiar and exclusive manner. All subjects belong to their king; but the king's children belong to the king in a very exclusive and more intimate manner. All the cities in the whole kingdom belong to the king; but the royal residence, the royal palace, belongs to the king above all others, and in the most peculiar way and manner. God has made us, children of men, according to his most wise counsel; he has formed us with his own hand, he has breathed life into us, has given us a spirit, a noble spirit, and has impressed upon this spirit his divine image; and therefore we are God's in a very superior and exclusive manner by creation. Do but read the genealogy of our Saviour, in Luke iii. the last verse of which says, "Enoch was the son of Seth, who was the son of Adam, who was the son of God." Man belongs therefore to God by creation; since he bears upon him the image of his father, which consists in righteousness and true holiness. At the creation of man, God gave him a spirit, a noble

spirit, which was capable of knowing, beholding, loving, and glorifying its Creator, a spirit which, at its creation, was destined by God, to be and continue to all eternity the dwelling of its God, the temple, palace, and residence of its God, in which God would glorify himself, and impart his divine virtues to it, so far as the creature is capable of them. Such is the dignity we possess by creation ! O if we knew what capacities, qualities, and what a noble spirit we bear about in us, to what it was destined at its creation, and whereunto it may again attain by redemption : we should never more act so basely ; we should never love the creature, sin, and vanity, nor suffer them to enter into our inmost souls ; we should never desire, with the prodigal son, to eat of the husks which the swine devour ; we should regard ourselves as much too high and too noble.

Now it is but too true, that man has certainly lost his high dignity since the fall. Alas ! I, and every other child of man, no longer bear the image of our heavenly Father ! The original dignity is lost, the glory is vanished, we no longer evince this image ; we are become dark, we are become abominable, we are become perverse and miserable by the fall. The heart, which ought to be the temple and habitation of God, and was destined for that purpose, has, alas ! made room for sin and Satan, and would continue for ever in their possession if God in Christ had not again compassionated the sinner. Listen, therefore, to this comfortable Gospel, this kind message, these sweet words, “ Ye are not your

own." Ye children of men! ye are become God's; and that, not alone by the right of creation, but also chiefly by the right of redemption and the purchase of Jesus Christ, even as Paul says, in the words, "Ye are not your own." But why not? Because "ye are bought with a price." And wherewith? Not with gold or silver, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Peter i. 19.) Thus dignified, noble, and precious, were our immortal souls in the estimation of God! Ah, if we only duly knew it, we should not act so inattentively, nay, in fact, so licentiously with our souls. Christ has purchased us from the free inclination of his love, and by this purchase, we are again become God's, and are therefore no longer our own. Christ, by the shedding of his blood, has again reconciled us unto God, to whom we had become obnoxious by sin. He has, I say, reconciled us unto God, by taking away the sin which separated us from God; so that God now again takes pleasure in us. By the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, God is again become ours, so that now the most wicked of mankind may again find God, as their God, in the atonement of Jesus Christ, if they only truly repent, and approach in faith unto God through Christ. God is not only ours by the redemption and purchase of Christ, but we are also become God's, both as it respects body and soul: hence Christ was obliged to take a body and a soul, in order that by the shedding of his blood he might sanctify us

again, both in body and soul, and place us in a situation to belong again to our God. Therefore, both our bodies and souls belong to God in Christ. Christ has, by this purchase, obtained a new *right*, and a new claim to our body and our soul. He can demand them, he can lay claim to them, they are now become his. By the shedding of his precious blood he has deprived the devil of his right over us; Satan has now lost all right to us, and, through the ransom paid by Christ, all sin has lost its right and claim to the children of men. Therefore no one ought reasonably to despair, as though he could not be delivered from the devil, the world, and sin. Hence, however much our foes may rage: they must nevertheless leave us entirely at liberty, if we only sincerely give ourselves up to the Saviour. God said to Pharaoh, 'Let my people go, that they may serve me' (Exod. ix. 1.) But Pharaoh would not; because he supposed he had another and more peculiar right to them. Yet, notwithstanding, no sooner was the paschal lamb slain, than he was compelled to let them depart, whether he would or not.

See, therefore, my dearest friends! what a great privilege, what great grace we deprive ourselves of, if notwithstanding all this, we still continue voluntarily to serve the devil and the world, from whom we might be so easily delivered by Christ, since he has purchased us; so that we now most justly belong to him, and are his. O how precious is this Gospel! But is it not treading under foot the blood of Christ,

and accounting it an unholy thing, when, notwithstanding all this, we still voluntarily remain sinners? We are not at all compelled to this, my beloved friends! We may soon be delivered. Christ is willing and able to make us free.

But, as far as we are true Christians, we are not only God's, according to the right of creation, and redemption, but we are also Christ's by the right of voluntary presentation and the giving up of ourselves to Christ. Christ has bought us; ought we not therefore to be peculiarly his? O that we might apprehend and believe this, with a still more thorough conviction of the heart, and not merely with the understanding! But if we are desirous of really partaking of the redemption of Jesus Christ: the thing purchased must be actually delivered up and given over to him. If Christ has purchased body and soul, if he has obtained the right of property over them: it remains, therefore, that we give them up to him, and place them in his hands. We must be unwilling any longer to continue our own; we must entirely yield ourselves up to Christ with body and soul, with heart and will.

Now the commencement of this is made in true conversion. But conversion, my dearest friends! does not consist in a mere outward propriety of conduct, in refraining from gross sins, in practising this and that virtue, in occasionally making some good resolutions, and offering the Lord God many fine and sweet words; in these and such like things, I say, conversion does not consist, but rather in this, that through the grace

of Jesus Christ, we become poor, weary, and heavy-laden sinners. Christ, as we have heard, in virtue of his purchase has obtained a right over us : and he seeks to legitimate this right in every one of us, by all the convictions, emotions, and knockings, he causes us to feel. He is desirous, that his purchase should be delivered over to him. This, my dearest friends ! is his object with us. Therefore a person who is desirous of sincerely giving and devoting himself to Christ, must previously have thoroughly perceived, felt and experienced his sinful, damnable, and entirely helpless state. He must feel most assuredly convinced, that out of Christ, he must be lost, both in time and eternity. He must then entirely surrender himself to Christ at discretion, like a poor culprit and malefactor, who is well aware that he has merited death, but who still consoles himself with the hope of mercy from his judge, and continually cries, "Is there no more mercy for me, a poor sinner?" Or, like the publican in the Gospel, who, beating upon his breast, exclaimed, "God be merciful to me a sinner !" But these were not mere words, which only came from the lips : they were words which proceeded from a lively acquaintance with his misery, from the most inward feeling of his pitiable condition, and from the deepest grief of his heart.

We must give ourselves up to Christ like a patient resigns himself to his physician, with these words, "I resign myself to your directions. If you know of any means to heal me, prescribe them ; and whether they be bitter or sweet, I will

take them. I will be obedient to you, if you are but able to help me and restore me to health." Thus it is we must surrender ourselves to Christ, as the only Saviour and physician of our souls, that by his grace, and the operations of his Spirit, he may make entirely new and different people of us, and redeem us from sin and all our misery.

We must present and yield up ourselves to Christ who has bought us, even as a bride gives and resigns herself to her bridegroom. As soon as the bride gives her consent to the bridegroom, she immediately presents him also her whole heart and her whole will. She is ready to follow him, wherever he chooses to go, and do what pleases him. She desires nothing else than to depend upon his command, his will, and his good pleasure. See, it is thus we must also present and resign ourselves to Christ, our dearest Redeemer, by our actual consent, and by a real surrender and transfer of our hearts, our wills, our bodies, and our souls. We must come to him as we are, and not wait till we have become pious, or rather have made ourselves pious; but we must come to Christ in our true characters, as miserable, as wretched, as sinful, and without strength as we feel ourselves: we must resign ourselves to him, give him our consent, and, by the co-operation of his Spirit, be and continue ever resigned to him, both in sorrow and in joy.

O happy hour! when the individual, by a thorough and real conversion of his heart, thus renounces all right over himself, closes his eyes

against himself and all his wretchedness, necessity, and weakness, and devotes, resigns, and surrenders himself to Christ as his Saviour. Blessed hour! over which the angels of heaven rejoice; an hour which, if I may so speak, stands inscribed in the Chancery of heaven, and will continue written, as an everlasting memorial in these words, "On such and such a day, and such and such an hour, this or that poor sinner surrendered himself to Christ, and is resolved henceforward to belong to him. For such characters he will also provide, such he will also justify, sanctify and bless.

Now, dearest friends! is there not one individual here to whom the present is to be such a happy hour? Reflect whether you have ever experienced such a one—whether you have ever sincerely given yourselves to your dearest Redeemer! O if that has not yet taken place, let it be done at least now: do it this moment. Do not go about any longer with a disturbed and accusing conscience. Christ has purchased you for time and eternity: therefore give yourselves no rest, till you have really delivered yourselves over to him, and entirely resigned yourselves to him.

We must, however, not only yield up ourselves, but also become, indeed and in truth, God's property; so that Jesus Christ, by his precious and Holy Spirit, may really take possession of us, according to the right he has most sacredly obtained over us, and henceforth be able to fix his continual abode with us. "Know ye not, that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, that is in you,

which ye have of God, and that ye are not your own?" As soon as an individual, by the saving grace of God appearing to him, is awakened to real conversion, and drawn to Christ—as soon as he yields and devotes himself sincerely, and to the best of his knowledge, to Christ—from that hour, from that moment, the Holy Spirit takes possession of such a heart, to work upon it by his gracious operation, and to prepare it for a holy temple of God, and carries this on continually during the whole course of our lives. By increasing and daily progress in sanctification and the renewing of the heart, he takes ever closer and more complete possession of the hearts of believers, whilst delivering them, more and more, by his gracious operation, from all evil, and making them partakers of the divine nature.

Therefore, my beloved friends! let us be continually mindful of the high purposes of God in our creation and redemption. God created man, chiefly that he might manifest and glorify himself in his inmost part, in his heart and spirit, both in time and eternity. That this was the high purpose of God, is testified both in the Old Testament, and particularly in the New. Thus, for instance, it is said in John, xiv. 23, "He that loveth me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." In the 2 Cor. vi. 16 we have also the following precious promise of God, "I will dwell in them and walk in them. I will be their God, and they shall be my people." As also in many other places, especially in the New Testament, where the greatest

promises of God are proposed to us, and his high intentions, which he had with respect to us, both in creation and redemption, are clearly made known to us.

The supreme dignity of a Christian, therefore, consists in this, that God, by his Holy Spirit, will himself dwell in our hearts. Of this, the late John Arndt has written very affectingly, in his third book of true Christianity, where he considers and represents the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers as a most valuable treasure, which so very few recognise, seek, and find. "God," says this pious divine, "would rather dwell in a man's heart, and glorify himself there, than in heaven and all the earth." Now, observe! this is that of which it is said, "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, which is in you." The Holy Spirit continually meets those who have resigned themselves to Christ, by his gracious operation, to purify themselves from all pollution of flesh and spirit, and to complete their sanctification, in order that they may become partakers of this great promise, as you may read in the connection of the 7th Chapter, of the second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians.

The Holy Spirit, in all his inward instructions, suggestions, and incitements to the denial of ourselves and all other things, has no other object than to purify our hearts, more and more, from all the dross of sin, and from all the corruption, misery, and woe, which still attaches to

us, that God may continually abide in our hearts as in his temple, and may reveal and glorify himself unceasingly in them. We will by no means venture, on this occasion, upon a copious explanation of the great, nay, the very greatest of wonders, how God, by his Holy Spirit, enters into the hearts of believers, and there takes up his abiding residence : but we will only exhort each and every one unremittingly to proceed in the denial of themselves and of all created things, in order that the Holy Spirit may the more unobstructedly continue with them and dwell in them. In order that the heart may become the habitation of the Holy Spirit, it is necessary that this impure and corrupt receptacle be first cleansed, and, by a thorough eradication of all creature love, be prepared for his fit habitation. The individual must, with the most inward desire and heartfelt prayer, retire into the centre of his heart, and there, by prayer, wait for his coming, and when he comes, make room for him, that he may do and work in him, according to his good will and pleasure. We must resign ourselves entirely to his operation, filially follow his guidance and direction, without any opposition, in order that he may remain with us, and that we may experience and enjoy his presence immutably and continually.

O my dear friends! let us therefore love God, let us make room for God and his Spirit within us! Let us frequently celebrate a holy Sabbath in our hearts unto him! O, we must not always frustrate the Holy Spirit in our

prayers, but most humbly say with the holy Apostle, "we know not what to pray for as we ought." And if we then sink down in the consciousness and acknowledgment of our helplessness: the Holy Spirit will come to our aid, and make intercession for us with sighs, that are unutterable, according to the will of God. God and his Holy Spirit then gradually acquire a more entire possession of our hearts, and we become more and more his temple and dwelling place.

But what is it, that the Holy Spirit operates in the hearts of believers? Truly, he is not there as a dead and lifeless image; let no one suppose so. O no! he continually works one gracious work after another. First, he reveals Jesus Christ in our hearts, according to the word of the Saviour, "When the Holy Spirit is come, he shall glorify me." John xvi. 14. But what is meant by the expression, "He shall glorify me?" I reply, he will give us to know and experience Jesus in our hearts, as a most inwardly present Saviour, whilst making his love, his grace, and his treasures appear to us so great and glorious, that we are as much astonished as rejoiced at the unsearchable riches of grace in Christ Jesus. When the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ in our hearts, the latter becomes daily more lovely, beautiful, estimable, and pleasant to us. We then experience how it is, that the knowledge of Christ is not a knowledge of the understanding; not a thing that one person can teach another; but a work of the Holy Spirit. We experience what St. Paul

means, when he says, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Phil. iii. 8. Then it is that the Holy Spirit is operative and present in our hearts, when Christ is so estimable, dear, and precious to us; that for his sake, we regard sin, the world, and all transitory things, however specious they may appear, as loss and dung, in order that we may win Christ.

When the Holy Ghost inhabits and animates the heart, he becomes the origin and source of every real virtue in the soul. Hence it is, that the virtues of Christians are described in the 5th chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, as fruits of the holy Spirit. For it is there said, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance." And in the Epistle to the Ephesians, chap. v. 9, he says, "The fruit of the Spirit is in all kindness, justice, and truth." A Christian man attains these virtues, when the Holy Spirit comes to reside in his heart. Such virtues then proceed, more and more, out of his heart, as fruits of the Spirit.

If we, poor mortals, were to martyr and torment ourselves even to death, we should still be unable to practise a single real and genuine virtue, without the assistance and powerful co-operation of the Holy Spirit. For if the Holy Spirit himself do not impart virtue to us, it is only the semblance of virtue, a shadow without substance. But the Christian's

virtue is not a mere shadow, nor a mere moral thing founded on the principles of outward decorum ; but it is a work proceeding out of the centre of a renewed and sanctified heart, and consequently from a divine source ; a work arising solely and wholly from a participation of the divine nature, by virtue of which, the virtues become quite natural to us. The harshest character then becomes friendly and kind, and the most wrathful, meek ; the haughtiest, humble ; and the most voluptuous, chaste. Hence the true dignity of a Christian consists in this, that he draws and deduces his godliness and his virtue originally from the source of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit not only glorifies Christ in the heart, but he also glorifies the soul, more and more, in and through Christ, by daily making the heart, which he inhabits, more beautiful, amiable, cordial, ingenuous, and radiant, as well in the sight of the world, as in God's sight. Hence Paul says, "We beholding, with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed or glorified into the same image, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 17, 18.) The Holy Spirit re-establishes, more and more, the lost image of God, imparts to the soul anew its lost glory, and forms it again into a child, in the entire likeness of God. The image of God and of Christ is impressed upon it by the Holy Spirit.

See, my dearest friends ! for this very reason, that the Holy Spirit is the source of all that is good to believers, it is, that they are acceptable, dear, and estimable to God, in their glorious and

excellent virtues. Hence there is no hypocrisy here, nor even a mere appearance. No ! it is a work of the Spirit, which he himself performs and produces in the hearts of believers. O the high degree of glory, to which a man, a Christian man may attain even here, during the time of grace ! Let us not be afraid of soaring too high in self-love in this respect, or of carrying the matter further than the Holy Scriptures allow. O no ! the Holy Scriptures confirm all this, in the most clear and impressive language. These are promises, nothing but God's gracious promises. And although the man, in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, receives, from this source, grace upon grace : yet still he does not presume upon it in the least ; partly because the glory, with which true believers are arrayed, generally continues hidden from them here, since their life is hid with Christ in God ; and partly because their hearts are always deeply penetrated by the words, " Which ye have of God." True Christians ascribe nothing to themselves of all they have, that is good, but wholly and solely to God, the giver of every good and perfect gift. They always consider themselves, in the deepest abasement of their hearts, as poor and wretched, and such as are entirely destitute of the praise they ought to have before God ; who are that which they are, from the grace and mercy of God, in order that to him alone may be given the glory, which is due to him both in time and eternity.

Observe, therefore, whether true Christians do not possess, even here, in this life, and during the time

of grace, a high and very exclusive dignity. We are obliged to show all due honour and obedience to magistrates and persons of rank, because they are the ministers of divine justice. But in other respects, the glory of the great ones of this world is a mere fancy compared with that of the true children of God. Emperors and kings entitle themselves, it is true, "by the grace of God;" but it is a far other dignity, to be able to say, with truth, that the individual has become, by divine grace, a child of God, and a temple of the Holy Spirit. Now, to this dignity, my beloved friends, we may all attain, if we only will, through the mercy of God, which is offered to sinners, in Christ Jesus.

II.—But if true Christians possess so great and sublime a dignity, they have also a great and sublime duty to observe, and that for the very same reason—because they are not their own, but God's, both as it respects body and soul. Hence it is said, in the words of our text, "Ye are not your own; therefore glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits, which are God's." Both our body and our spirit are God's, and not our own. Christ has purchased them, therefore we must praise and glorify God with both, that is, with our body and our spirit. It is consequently, not only hypocrisy and error, when an individual, in worshipping God, offers him only that which is external: approaches him with his lips, but cleaves with his heart to the earth; and continues far from God: but it is also a shameful and pernicious de-

ception, and a false spirituality, which seeks to put asunder that which God hath joined. Hence it is, also, a dangerous deception for any one to pretend that he can and ought to serve God only in the spirit, and that he need not pay such strict attention to externals; and that it is therefore nothing very heinous or criminal, although our bodies are serving sin and vanity, if the spirit, during the time, is serving God. Dangerous and shameful deception! Christ has purchased body and soul; therefore both must praise God, and be dedicated to his service. I am not my own, but God's. The life of my spirit, the life of my body, my powers and faculties belong not to me, but to God. Therefore, for this very reason, I must praise God with my body. Hence David says, "My tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness, my heart and flesh shall rejoice in the living God." "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight." I must desire neither grace, nor long life, neither health, nor bodily powers, except for the sole end and purpose of applying them to the service of God, to whom they alone belong, and to his praise and glory. I must devote all my powers and faculties to him, all must be for him. If I only employ them in eating and drinking, in amassing money and possessions, or in attaining honour, in order to live in ease and pleasure; I commit a culpable wrong. I have no right nor authority over my bodily powers, no right nor power over my property; I must offer them up to God, and devote them to his service. I dare

not use my limbs, for instance, my hands and my other members, as instruments of unrighteousness ; I dare not lend them to sin, as Paul says, that we are not to make our members instruments of unrighteousness : but I must present them to God, as instruments of righteousness, to praise and glorify him. “ Know ye not,” says the same Apostle, in the chapter from which the words of our text are taken (verse 15), “ that your bodies are the members of Christ ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot ? God forbid ! ” Shall I take the members that belong to Christ, and make of them members of pride, members of unrighteousness ! What a shame—what an abomination ! No ! my members must be given up to God, as instruments of righteousness, in order to serve him with them, to the best of my ability. I dare not work, with my hands, any thing but what is good and useful to others ; I dare not use my tongue for the purpose of sinful, vain, and worthless conversation. My tongue belongs to Christ ; therefore it must be devoted to him. All useless words, by which he is not praised, magnified, and glorified, must be most carefully avoided ; and thus I must act with all my other members. This is that real and complete service, which God requires of his people, even as we read in the 12th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, that we are to “ present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.” Thus, our senses, our eyes, ears, and all the rest, are no longer our own, who are Christians, but they belong to

Christ, because he has purchased them for his service. Therefore, since Christ has purchased my body and my senses, I must not lend my ears and eyes to hear or see any thing sinful; but like Job, I must make a covenant with my eyes and ears, that I do not desire to hear, see, taste, and feel any thing that does not lead me to God; and that I immediately apply all that I hear, see, taste, and enjoy, to the praise and glory of God, and thus praise and glorify God with my senses.

I must praise and glorify God in my body and in my spirit. Now, my heart belongs to my spirit; it is no longer mine, it does not belong to me. Your hearts no longer belong to yourselves; they are God's by the purchase of Jesus Christ, therefore, on this very account, I dare not love the world, nor that which is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. My heart belongs entirely to God; I must therefore present and devote my love, my inclinations, and desires to him; or else I commit real sacrilege. Ought I to deprive God of a thing dedicated to him, a thing which belongs with the most perfect justice to him? Ought I to steal my heart from Christ, and lend it to sin? Ought I to rob Christ of the inclinations, the noble affections, to which he alone has a right, and present them to the creature? Ought I to take pleasure in vanity? Have I not enough in Christ? Why ought I to desire any thing else beside him? This would be just as much as if I said to him, ‘Thou alone art not enough; I must therefore have

something else for my gratification besides thee !' This be far from us ! Let us delight ourselves in the Lord alone and entirely. For he alone is able to give us all that our hearts can wish and desire, both in time and eternity. Christ, who has bought our hearts, not with gold and silver, but with his precious blood, and has therefore the greatest right to them, will not have them half and divided, but is desirous of possessing them entirely. And even this is much too insignificant and little for such a lover, for such a high and lofty God. We ought therefore to make no other use of our hearts, than to devote them entirely to the love of God, so as to love God continually, with all our hearts and all their powers. Observe ! we ought to love God *with our whole heart* ; not the smallest particle ought to be taken away from him, for it belongs to him entirely.

My will is no longer my own, since Christ has purchased me, and has weaned my spirit from the world. My will is become God's by purchase and by presentation. I dare not use my will, any more, according to my own will or my own good pleasure ; for self-will must no more be mentioned amongst Christians. The words, I will, and I will not, are disgraceful in the mouth of a true Christian. Our will must be resigned to Christ. We must be prepared to live according to his will, and not according to the will of the Gentiles. We must ever be ready and willing to follow the smallest intimations of his good pleasure. The pernicious and unrighteous liberty, which has remained over to us, since our

sinful fall, we must and ought entirely to yield up to Christ, as a voluntary gift. We ought to renounce all right over our own will, in order that Christ, by his Spirit, may alone will, and not will in us, and rule and govern us according to his free option and good pleasure.

My understanding is not mine ; it does not belong to me, but it is become God's by more than one right. And on that very account I must glorify God with my understanding. I dare not make use of my understanding for things, which are sinful, and which lead away from God ; but I must use it solely for the glorification of him, who has bestowed it upon me for that purpose. I must employ my understanding so as willingly to submit myself to the operations of the spirit of grace, in order that I may learn to know God, and walk in filial reverence, in his most sacred presence, which is the very noblest act of the understanding, namely, contemplating God as present, glorifying God, and filially knowing it is in this way and manner that we ought to use the powers of our understandings. It is therefore extremely shameful, to occupy our understanding so frequently and manifoldly with vain, useless, and even disgraceful and highly objectionable things. Ah, my dearest friends ! is that praising God with the understanding, praising him in body and in spirit ? Do we humble ourselves before God, when we thus suffer our ideas and imaginations to wander ? Do we glorify him by our thoughts and meditations ? Is it this, or other things that fill our minds ?

We ought to glorify our God both with our body and with our spirit. We must seek to glorify him both outwardly and inwardly. Therefore as much as we do not seek to walk according to our vocation, holy and blamelessly in the sight of God, as well as before the eyes of men : God is not only not glorified by us, but rather dishonoured and disgraced. For when those individuals, who have the appearance of being particularly devoted and attached to godliness, lead at the same time a culpable life, and act as the world does ; the latter is then ready to say, 'Look, these are the people who would be better than others ; who bear the name of pious saints and regenerate, and yet they are no less fond of vanity than the world, and seek after wealth and riches, and after great honours. It is all mere hypocrisy with them. It is true, they have the name that they live, but they are no less spiritually dead than other men.' Thus it is that God is not glorified, but his work and his name is only disgraced and dishonoured.

We must however not only seek to walk holily and unblameably before God, but also before the eyes of the church ; yea, before each and every one, and actually show them that we are sincerely diligent in following after holiness in all its parts. But we glorify God especially, and praise him in our spirits, when we love, honour, and esteem those, who by God's grace, are anointed with his Holy Spirit and made partakers of his blessings, for the sake of such gifts and graces ; when we lay all the good we have, and perform, at the Lord's feet, walk before God in the

deepest humility, and ever reflect within ourselves that we have received all from God, and that it is not our own. Every thing, that men possess, is the gift and bestowment of God, to whom they must therefore solely ascribe all they have that is good. And this is the most obvious proof of a thorough knowledge of God, and also of ourselves, as well as of genuine godliness, when a person ascribes nothing of all the good he possesses to himself, but all to God; and says with the Psalmist, "Not unto us, O Lord! not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and thy truth's sake." (Psalm cxv. 1.) Thou alone hast bestowed it, and to thee alone shall the honour of it be rendered.

III.—But great as are the duties of a Christian, so great and immutable is the constant and abiding comfort in life and death, which results from a strict observance of them. But this comfort arises from this cause, that we are not our own, but God's. This we have often learnt from the Catechism, in our youth; for when it is there asked, "What is thy sole consolation in life and death?" The answer is, "This, that with body and soul, both in life and death, I am not my own, but belong to my faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ." Yes, verily, herein lies the most secure and unshaken consolation for true Christian believers: 'I am no longer my own, but have become God's by the purchase and acceptance of Christ.' As long as a poor girl is her own master, she is chargeable with all her debts, but as soon as

she has given her consent to a very rich man, who is willing to betroth himself to her, all her debts are paid. O this is a very important consolation ! A person, that is no longer his own, but in Christ, has become God's property, has no longer need to vex and burden himself with the guilt of his sins ; this is a real truth, a most sure and immutable consolation in life and death.

How miserable it is, to live with a disturbed and ever accusing conscience in this world ! Let the individual do what he pleases, in order to deliver himself from the pungent accusations of conscience ; let him hasten, for this purpose, from one amusement to another, from one society to another ; all will nevertheless be in vain. It is like a creditor, who always duns and accuses, who gives the debtor no rest, wherever he may betake himself, and whatever he may undertake. But if, in real heartfelt conversion, and in consequence of having given our sincere consent to Christ, we are become his, and are therefore no longer our own : Christ takes upon himself all the debt transferred over to him ; so that we need no longer care for it, but boldly refer all our creditors to him, as to one who is ready to take all upon himself, and to pay every debt with his own blood ; in such a manner, that both during our whole life, and also in the hour of our departure, we may have a filial confidence in his favour. He that, by the purchase of Christ, and by a sincere surrender of himself to him, is no longer his own, but has become God's, has no longer any thing to do with other

claims. As long as a maiden has not given her consent, she may have many suitors, and be much hurried about by them. Thus it is with our poor hearts, as long as we do not come to Christ. As long as we do not give ourselves sincerely, fully, and thoroughly to Christ, the devil, the world, and the corrupt flesh, seek to draw the soul first one way and then another, and to disturb it in a variety of ways. Happy, yea, thrice happy, therefore is he, who has thoroughly and sincerely given himself to Christ, and by an undissembled consent, has betrothed himself to him in eternal fidelity. Such a one can most justly say and sing in the words of the poet :

I am betrothed. Sin, world, and self depart !

Ye woo, in vain, a God-devoted heart.

What charms have ye to fascinate my love ?

Sorrow and death result from your embrace ;

Fill'd with disgust, I turn away my face,

And scorn your honours and your joys to prove.

Nay, though you should, with all your might oppose,

You never more shall trouble my repose.

Thus it is, that souls, which by a real presentation and surrender, have become Christ's, may boldly tell the devil, the world, and sin to their face, that they are Christ's, that they belong to Christ ; and that therefore they have nothing more to say to them, nor have any authority over them. If we are become Christ's, if we are become God's, we have nothing more to do with all these enemies.

As soon as a virgin is betrothed, all those who

have paid court to her, must immediately retire, and dare not approach her any more. Such is also the case with a soul, which has given its consent to Christ, and has betrothed itself to him in eternal affection. Satan, the world, and sin have no more part in such a one; they dare not visit him any more with their caresses; they have eternally lost all claim to him. Further, as a virgin, when betrothed, has no longer need to care for her support, but leaves her bridegroom to provide for her: so likewise those souls, who, by true conversion and presentation, have become Christ's own, need no longer care for themselves, either as it respects body or soul. For God, who in Christ, has now become their God and reconciled Father, knows that they require meat and drink, and also raiment to cover their nakedness. They now stand under the peculiar oversight and protection of their heavenly Father, so that according to the letter of Scripture, without the will of their Father in heaven, not a hair of their heads shall fall to the ground. They have only a single thing to observe, and carefully to attend to, and with this one, every thing is accomplished. "Give me, my son, thy heart." Inasmuch as they sincerely resign this, and eternally yield it up to Christ, they may divest themselves entirely of all other cares. Therefore it is said further, "And let thine eyes observe my ways." The Holy Spirit intends to say by this, 'Thou needest take no more thought concerning what thou shalt eat and drink, and wherewithal thou shalt be clothed; in what manner, and howsoever

it may fare with thee in future, with respect to body or soul. No, I will provide for every thing, I will do all things well ; only let my ways please thee, however I may act or ordain concerning thee. Whether I send thee health or sickness, riches or poverty, or whether I exalt or abase thee, be ever pleased with my ways, and thou shalt know, that all things shall serve for thy good, whether it be a state of barrenness or spiritual enjoyment, whether light or darkness, &c.' Yes, if we have sincerely given ourselves up to God, and are Christ's own possession, all things must certainly work together for our good. Now is not this a great and unspeakable consolation? And to express it briefly : he that belongs to Christ, and is no more his own—his own lord and master—has nothing more to fear. He that belongs to Christ, need not be afraid of his enemies; nor of their power and subtlety. Ah ! I can scarcely bear that men make Satan so omnipotent, as if he could do what he pleased ; as if he could retain people captive as long as he chose to do so. This is by no means the case. Christ has taken from him all power and all right over us. On which account those who have sincerely yielded themselves up to Christ, and are really his property, have nothing more to fear from the devil. Let us much rather be afraid of ourselves, of our own evil and corrupt hearts, and place a mistrust in ourselves. Let us only thoroughly, and without any reserve, resign our hearts to Christ, who has so dearly bought us ; and then the devil and the world will be afraid of us. For

certainly the radiance and the glory which rests upon the children of God, as that wherein the Spirit of Jesus Christ dwells, is so dreadful both to the devil and the world, that they flee from it and are afraid of it. Whilst on the contrary, such a confidence in God is imparted, through Christ, to those souls that have devoted themselves to God, that they can say with David, "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" (Psalm xxvii. 1.) "God is our refuge and strength, therefore will we not fear." (Psalm xlii.)

Finally, it is also a great and immutable privilege to be no longer our own, but to have become God's, both in body and soul, and particularly so in the hour of death. Oh! the dreadful hour! Dreadful to all the unconverted; dreadful to nature! In the hour of death, when there is no consolation either in heaven or on earth: this is and continues to be a sure and unshaken consolation, "Thou art not thine own, but God's." But if I am no longer my own, but God's, and belong to Christ, I therefore need not care, nor be afraid, nor apprehensive of an evil result. If I belong to Christ: he will not suffer that which is his to be lost, nor let it be taken from him, but he will know how to preserve me, after giving and presenting myself to him, so as that I shall not be again taken from him. For he has himself said, "Father, I have lost none of those whom thou hast given me." He has continually preserved them, as the apple of his eye. And though the body may moulder in the ground,

and become a putrifying carcase, and millions of atoms : yet this does not trouble me. For it is not *my* body, but it is become God's. Therefore I am unconcerned about it. Christ is Lord both of life and death ; he will eventually again bring forth the body, which is equally his, and make it like unto his glorious body. In short, it is impossible to find a more complete consolation than this, that we are God's, and not our own. A true believer, in his dying hour, may therefore say to Christ, in truth and reality, in the words of the hymn,

That I to thee united am,
Brings comfort to my heart ;
With thee connected I remain,
Nor pain nor death shall part :
For though I die, I shall for ever live.

And as it is further said, in the succeeding verse :—

Since thou hast risen from the dead,
I shall not in the grave remain,
Thy rising is my comfort made ;
The fear of death assaults in vain,
For where thou art, there I shall be, &c:

Where Christ is, thither I must also come. Hence he says, “ I will that where I am, they may be also, whom the Father has given me.”

I ought now, in conclusion, to make an application of the great and much implying expression, “ Know ye not ?” and institute an examination upon it ; but the time is elapsed. I would otherwise have said to

the unconverted, Know ye not your unhappiness? Know ye not, that if the Holy Spirit does not dwell in your heart, another spirit inhabits there, namely a wicked spirit, and that you consequently belong to it. O what an unhappy and dreadful state! Know ye not, ye unhappy children of men, know ye not, that you will be his portion in death, to whom you have belonged in life? O what a misfortune is that! Know ye not that a day will come, in which each will take his own to himself? when Christ shall appear in his glory, and place those that belong to him, on his right hand, as sheep; but those that belong to the prince of hell, as goats, on his left hand! What a dreadful thought! Know ye not, that this is now the time of grace? a time in which the precious gospel is still preached and offered you? Know ye not, that you are really not your own? That ye are bought with a price? That ye may even now become happy men, and children of God. Are you well aware of this? Ah no! men spend their lives, as if they were without God in the world. Christ reminds us of and demands his right to our hearts: but men spend their days in a careless manner, as if Christ were sitting still and quietly in heaven, and were totally unconcerned about our hearts. O reflect, with true seriousness, whether it is possible for you to have a single quiet hour, as long as you do not sincerely give yourselves to God. But if you belong to Christ—if ye are God's, according to the right of creation, and by the right of purchase: give to God, what is God's.

Give him your hearts, your body, your soul; otherwise you will find no rest, either here or hereafter.

I have still to address these words to you, my fellow-called; know ye not that ye are a temple of the Holy Ghost? Know ye not to what a high and superlative dignity ye are created, redeemed, and called? and how you are under the operation of the Holy Ghost? Are you aware what creatures we are? What grace has been bestowed upon us? What God, even our God, purposes respecting us? and to what we may attain, even here, in this present time of grace? Ah, we only know it by the understanding, whilst the heart has not the slightest impression of it; the mind is entirely unaffected by it, otherwise we would certainly pursue our calling to glorify God, with far greater diligence. O, therefore, from henceforth, let body and soul be devoted to God alone! Know ye not, that this is your most imperative duty and obligation? Yes, we know it, when we read of it occasionally; when we are sometimes reminded of it; but scarcely is this done,—scarcely is the book closed, the word of admonition over, than we afterwards think little of that which we have heard. Ah, my dear friends, do not let it be as a passing sound; let it not continue mere head-knowledge. Let the word, at this time, penetrate deeply into your hearts! Let us take it to heart, more than we have ever done hitherto, and seek to remain, as much as possible, constantly near our hearts, in order that we may be the more pre-

pared to give a willing ear to the continual demands of Christ, and to fulfil them, as well as to walk steadfastly in all and every virtue, which is well pleasing to God. Ah, my dearest friends! let' us never seek to walk otherwise before God, than with a cheerful and upright mind. Do we possess the great privilege of being God's property, and no longer our own? Let the time, which still remains to us, be employed in endeavouring to glorify God with our bodies and souls, in dedicating our powers and faculties to him, and in offering and presenting to him our whole hearts, in order that when once we shall have to pass from time into eternity, Christ may take his own to himself, and that we may be gathered, as pure wheat, into his garner. I now break off, in order to leave our worthy minister time and place to address to us a further word of awakening and edification for the establishment and confirmation of the truth.

THE BELIEVER'S REST.

“ The God of peace, that brought again from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do his will, and enable us also at this time to do that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Christ Jesus, to whom be glory for ever and ever ! Amen.”

SINCE it has pleased the Almighty to call one of our dear friends by death, out of time into eternity ; we ought to regard it, as though a voice from the eternal world again called to us *to prepare to follow him speedily*. We will, therefore, mutually lay this to heart ; since many of our dear friends have assembled conjointly to devote an hour to the Lord, and to strengthen themselves in this truth. And although, for my own part, I feel myself at present entirely incapable of addressing you : yet the power of God may nevertheless manifest itself in my weakness. For this reason ought the hearts of all of us to be lifted up, with the eyes of faith, to him, from whom every good and perfect gift must descend. Let us then, first of all, humble ourselves before the Lord our God, adore him, and entreat his gracious presence and effectual blessing.

PRAYER.

Amen, O thou thrice holy God ! Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ! to thee is the glory ascribed by many thousands of the heavenly hosts, who behold thy face. Let the glory be also ascribed to thee from thy poor creatures now assembled in this little corner of the earth below. Let all that is within us bow before thee and testify that thou art God, the refuge of the miserable in every age. Thou, O God, wast, before the world was formed ; thou wast, before the sea and this earth were made ; thou art God from everlasting. Thou alone hast immortality, and alone impartest immortal and eternal life and being to those who believe on thy name. Through thy grace, our hearts pay homage unto thee, and confess thee as the author of our being and our well-being. From thee have we derived and received our life and breath ; by thee and thy long suffering power has our life been preserved to this hour, and from thee, all our days and moments depend. One man dies and leaves this world, and another follows him. How soon and how quickly wilt thou, as our Judge, say also to us, "Return ye children of men, to the eternity, from whence you proceeded." O thanks be to thine infinite goodness and love to man, thou lover of life ; that thou hast still preserved to us the time of grace, and this our natural life, in the gracious intention, that we may become fitted for thy eternal life, which is to be found in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, thy dear Son ! Thanks be to

thee for all thy loving-kindness unto man, by which thou didst think upon our souls, before we had a being, and didst labour for their good, by so many inward drawings of thy grace, and so many outward means of grace, of which the present occasion is a proof. Thanks be to thee, therefore, for this season of grace and salvation. O let us esteem it as highly important, and make it truly blessed and beneficial to our souls! O Jesus! be thou present in our midst, as a God of life and grace. Give us most impressively to experience, in our hearts, the power of thy life to rouse us from all slothfulness and false security, to direct and instruct us effectually in all that is incumbent upon us to do or leave undone—to inflame our hearts, which are cold in thy love—to implant in us a living faith—and to give us a thorough knowledge as well of the importance of eternal things, as of the nothingness of temporal things, in order that we may walk circumspectly during our short passage to eternity, and may at length yield up our souls unto thee, in meek repose and resignation. Bless us all therefore, with a gracious view of thy countenance. Behold our poor hearts, and let them be precious in thy sight. Give us, on this occasion, some additional supply from the fulness of thy grace, that we may become truly acquainted with thee, our God! and consequently pursue our course to a long eternity so much the more courageously and resolutely, and eventually obtain an abundant entrance into thine heavenly kingdom. Forgive us all our negligences,

both with reference to time, and grace, as also to the means of grace, for the sake of the precious merits of our only High Priest, thine only begotten Son. Amen.

The words which we shall take for the subject of our consideration at present, stand written in

HEBREWS iv. 11.

“ Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest.”

From these words, we shall take occasion mutually to consider and reflect upon the following question :—

How we may attain to our true and eternal rest of soul in this life, and how we may perfectly possess it when we come to die?

This consideration ought to appear to us so much the more important and necessary, the more customary it is, on the one hand, for people to say of one deceased, ‘ He fell asleep in the Lord,’ as well as what is wont to be inscribed on tombstones, ‘ He rests in peace ;’ whilst alas ! there is, very frequently, ground for the strongest suspicion to the contrary. On the other hand, even those that are awakened and called to godliness, walk so slothfully, and are still as far from the promised rest of soul, as they are from the experience of it. Hence it is certainly worth the while to examine whence this arises, and what we must do, in order to find our

eternal rest of soul in this life, that we may eventually realize it perfectly at the hour of death.

There is an expression of St. Augustine, which is as remarkable, as it is profound and true. He says, "Our hearts were created for thee, O Lord ! and therefore they cannot rest, until they attain to thee again." Every individual thing can only rest and be satisfied in its own element ; a fish in the water, a bird in the air, and our spirit when it lives in God. Every living creature is quiet and satisfied, when it has attained that object, that end and aim for which it was created. The object, end, and aim for which we are created, is not this world, nor any of those things, that are in the world, but solely and exclusively God in Christ Jesus. In short, the rest, the eternal repose of our souls is only to be found in the friendship and fellowship of God. For this friendship and fellowship of God, man indeed was created ; but by his melancholy fall, he has been wholly deprived of it again ; in consequence of which, man was not only outwardly driven out of paradise ; but alas ! paradise, the rest in God, was also lost in his soul. The life of God was extinguished in him ; the kingdom of heaven disappeared from within him. His heart became miserable, wretched, restless, and dark ; and man now, in the natural state, in which he is born, is a very restless creature. No animal, no worm that crawls the earth, which is trodden under our feet, is so wretched when it dies, as a man, who dies without God ; and hence, being out of his element and

without his object, he must rove about eternally destitute of rest.

But God be eternally praised, who has again had mercy upon us in Christ, from free love and unmerited grace, and intends that we should again partake of an eternal rest; having promised immediately after the fall, the Messiah, who was to bring fallen man once more to rest. To this end, God hallowed the seventh day, as a day of rest, in order that faith might regard it and learn from it, that a believing soul, after her days of work and labour, has finally also to expect a day of rest. But the most obvious and important type, by which the promised rest in Christ to poor and penitent sinners, is represented, is that of the bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt, and their introduction into the land of Canaan, which was given by God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their seed, for their outward and bodily resting place. Paul refers to this, both in the verses preceding, as well as in the words of our text, in order thereby to place before our eyes the real and true rest of soul promised us in Christ, of which the outward rest in the land of Canaan, into which Joshua led the people of Israel, was only a type, but not the true rest itself, which is promised and accomplished for us in Christ, as the antitype of Joshua. He means to say, that Joshua indeed introduced the people into the outward and bodily rest, but not into the promised rest of soul. This takes place solely through Christ. "Let us labour therefore, to enter into that rest."

Let us look at the thing a little more closely. The children of Israel lived in Egyptian bondage, where they were obliged to perform the hardest tasks assigned them, under much anxiety and oppression. Now this is a perfect description of the very miserable state of an unconverted character. Ah! are not the days of such a one, like the days of a hireling, full of disturbance and weariness? The hireling longs indeed for the evening, when he may rest from his labour. But how very short is his repose! He must return again to his work, and never comes to the end of his labour. Thus it is also with wretched men, as long as they live in their state of nature, and are consequently deprived of the fellowship and friendship of God. For when the individual imagines that he occasionally enjoys some repose, it is not of long duration: he always begins to feel his restlessness anew. But God sent a deliverer to the people of Israel, in the person of Moses, who was commissioned to call them forth out of Egypt, to deliver them from their grievous bondage, and to bring them into the land of Canaan, the promised rest, that being delivered from all such oppressions, they might be enabled to serve the Lord their God, unhindered, and with all freedom. If the people of Israel had not been called, by the mercy of God, out of Egypt, they would never have entered the land of Canaan. This is another striking description, of all that must take place with and in us, if we are willing to be led forth out of the Egypt of this world, and our corrupt natural state,

find the promised eternal rest in this life, and perfectly enter into it at death. For a call must go forth to us, to depart out of the slavery of sin, the devil, the world and its vanities. This call, however, does not take place, by means of any loud and audible voice from heaven, but by the preaching of the Divine Word, by its knocking at our hearts, and by the conviction of our consciences, by a variety of benefits, by chastisements and judgments, as well as by many a good example, which the Lord places before us. But what would it have availed the children of Israel, if they had only heard the call of God, but had not obeyed it? Would they have been redeemed, and have entered into rest? Thus it is also with us, on our departure out of spiritual Egypt. We must not only listen to the convincing voice of Divine grace, which calls unto us; but we must also follow and obey it, if we are desirous of being delivered and brought out of the tyranny of sin and Satan, to God, and to rest in God. Hence Paul says in the 2nd verse, "It was preached unto us, as well as unto them, but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Hence he also calls unto us from the 95th Psalm, "To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." But in order to attain to this rest in the present life, and at length enjoy it perfectly at death, the following things are required:—

I. That we not only listen to the voice of God, which calls to us, but also follow it.

II. That we diligently observe, whether our conversion is of the right kind.

III. That we build our faith solely on the grace of God in Christ.

IV. That we deny every thing of an earthly nature.

V. That we deny, not only outward things, but ourselves also.

VI. That we entirely resign ourselves to the divine providence and guidance, and depend upon it alone.

VII. That we exercise ourselves diligently in prayer.

First. In order that we may find the true and promised rest of soul in this life, and fully attain to it afterwards at death, we must not only hear the voice of God, which calls us out of the Egypt of this world, and out of our corrupt state of nature, but also obey and follow it. How would the children of Israel have ever entered into the land of Canaan, if they had not been obedient to the voice of God, speaking by Moses, and obeyed it? This is a true representation of the calling and convincing voice of grace, which makes itself heard at the commencement of our conversion. We cannot attain to the promised rest, otherwise, than by giving ear to the voice of divine grace, which calls unto us, and by letting ourselves be led forth from sin's house of bondage into a true repentance and conversion, and into a painful feeling of our sinfulness, by which we

are driven to Christ, that through him, and his abundant merits, we may re-attain to friendship and fellowship with God. When Moses came into Egypt, and announced the call of God to the children of Israel, and they began to receive this call, the heaviest burdens were laid upon the people; the labour, suffering, and oppression was doubled. Thus it happens also to us, with respect to the grace of God, when first it calls, knocks at our hearts, and brings conviction to us. Sin then becomes truly sinful in us; and grace begins to reveal to us the hostile and remote condition of our souls with reference to God. Then follows weeping and lamenting, sorrow and sighing in the soul; so that it appears that this first conviction, instead of bringing the individual to rest, rather occasions him fresh disturbance. It only discovers, however, the hidden agitation, which was already in the heart of the individual who is separated from God. But if the man be obedient to the voice of God, if he suffer himself to be led forth out of the Egypt of sin, and, by the feeling of it, to be driven to Christ, he finds, by this very means, the first entrance into the promised rest of his soul.

Hence it is in vain for a man to seek to attain peace of heart and conscience, by faith in Christ Jesus in this life, without true repentance, without a thorough change of heart, and without seriously departing from the Egypt of this world. It is a vain, nay, a shameful abuse of the grace of God, and the merits of Christ, for a man to suppose, by an imagi-

nary consolation, which he takes to himself, on account of his honest and upright walk, on account of the observance of outward religious duties, or on account of a false appropriation of the merits of Christ, that he shall find the promised rest of his soul in this life, and afterwards attain it perfectly at death.

Man! if thou wilt not be obedient to the voice of divine grace, convincing thee and calling thee to repentance, to conversion, and to a living faith: all thy rest is nothing but a false and imaginary rest. It is not only vain and delusive in life, but also at death. For the Spirit of God says, "There is no peace to the wicked." (Isa. xlviii. 22.) That is, during their lives, they cannot have a tranquil heart, and much less so when they come to die. It is vain and delusive for an unconverted man, who has never been obedient to the call of God, nor suffered himself to be led by it out of the Egypt of his sinful nature, to let himself be consoled, on his dying bed, by miserable comforters, and be persuaded, that after his decease, he shall perfectly attain to the promised rest. Alas! it is all a deception! No Peter, nor any one else, who may pretend to have the keys of the kingdom of heaven in his hand, will be able to open heaven for thee, or to give thee the promised everlasting rest in heaven, as far as thou dost not let thyself be brought, by the convincing voice of grace, to true repentance and amendment of life, and be led forth, out of the Egypt of this world, to Christ, the true Joshua; even as he himself invites thee, when he says, "Come unto me, all ye that are

weary and heavy laden. Come unto me, and I will refresh you; take my yoke upon you, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." It will never be attained in any other way.

Therefore, my beloved! if your consciences tell you, that you have hitherto been unconverted characters, O labour to enter into the promised rest! Soon, soon, will the evening of our lives approach. Therefore, since the gate still stands open, hasten that ye may enter in. What! if death were suddenly to overtake you, and the door were all at once to be closed against you, how would you then be able? O how pitiable and lamentable does it sound, when we read in the parable of the ten virgins, that the foolish came too late, and found that the door was shut! How suddenly is the door closed, by an unexpected death, against many a one, who has delayed his repentance and conversion from day to day! Let us therefore hasten, that we may enter into that rest, which is still announced and offered to us. We must labour—not delay, not long consider first, nor suppose that it will come of itself. O no! earnestness must be employed, if we are desirous of being led out of the Egypt of this world, and delivered from our sinful natural state. Earnestness and diligence are requisite, in order that our hard and haughty hearts may be humbled and rendered contrite. Earnestness must be exercised in hungering and thirsting after that grace in Christ, which stands open to poor sinners. It is thus, that we find, through true

repentance and change of heart, the first admission to this promised rest of our souls, since conscience is tranquillized, and the favour of God is preached to us in the following manner: "Be of good cheer, my son ! be of good cheer, my daughter ! thy sins are forgiven thee."

Secondly. If we are desirous of finding the promised rest in this life, and of attaining it afterwards perfectly at death, we must diligently observe whether our conversion is of the true kind. Many are converted, but not in a proper manner, as God complains in the 7th chapter of the Prophet Hosea. Many are induced by extremity, or from fear of death and hell, to begin to convert themselves and to become pious ; but they do not turn with their whole hearts ; there is no thorough conversion in their case ; their departure out of the Egypt of this world is no sincere and complete departure. Many a one may indeed assume such an appearance outwardly, that one would think he was really converted, because he conducts himself outwardly like other Christians ; but it is all a deception ; it does not proceed from the bottom of the heart, and hence he still continues in secret uneasiness. What he does, in this state, he only does from compulsion ; he does it outwardly, but cleaves, at the same time, to the things of this world. He is willing to give God something, but the world something also. Such persons cannot possibly find rest for their souls. They are like Lot's wife. She also went out with her husband ; but she went out merely with her body, and not with her heart, which

still adhered to Sodom, and to many dear things she had left behind her. O dearest friends ! as long as we do not give up all, and completely forsake all, we cannot attain even to the very commencement of the rest of our souls. Our departure must be like that of the children of Israel out of Egypt, which is presented to us as a type of this. When the people of Israel were about to depart out of Egypt, Pharaoh sought to make terms and conditions with them. It was true he consented to their departure, but they were to leave their wives and children behind them. He afterwards desired that they should leave their cattle behind them, thinking, that if he only retained something of theirs, they would soon come back again. It is thus that the infernal Pharaoh also acts. He can bear that a man be converted, that he do much good, that he exercise himself in prayer, and other outward devotional duties, as long as any thing remains, by which he can, to day or to-morrow, draw the heart again to himself. Such like half conversions are no conversions, and cannot tranquillize the heart, because they do not bring it to Christ. Such characters are in a state of continual uneasiness. Moses said to Pharaoh, " Not a hoof shall remain behind." My friends ! if you are desirous of obtaining rest through your repentance and conversion, let your departure be complete, so that not a hoof—that is, not the smallest thing may remain behind.

O when a converted and pious man, does not become so entirely, but is willing to retain at least a little of the world for himself, he always continues in

a state of despondency and uneasiness, and makes no progress! What hinders? "Israel," says God, "I cannot be with you any more, for thou hast a cursed thing in the midst of thee." (Josh. vii. 12.) That is a cursed thing, which places us in God's displeasure; when we knowingly retain even the smallest particle of our worldly love, and wish to deprive God of the smallest part of our hearts. O soul! there is a cursed thing in thee! therefore it is that thou art uneasy; therefore it is that thou makest no progress in religion. Ah! is it not lamentable and pitiable, that, frequently, for the sake of some very inferior thing, which the individual will not give up to please God, he passes his whole life in torment and uneasiness? And how wretched it is with such people on their dying beds! How frequently have I myself observed this in dying persons! For when they were at length reduced to the greatest extremity, they were obliged to confess that they had still kept back this thing and that; that they had still some particular vice which they would not else have mentioned; something which they were unwilling to give up. O how lamentable is such a sight! This must necessarily disturb the repose on a dying bed, where the individual ought to find free admission into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

My friends! let us give diligence to enter into the true and eternal rest, which is promised us, by a complete departure from this world and sin. Let us present ourselves, naked and bare, in the sight of God, that he may search and try our hearts, whether

we are really sincere in seeking him ; whether there be not still some accursed thing within us, on account of which our minds are still so uneasy, and because of which, we have not yet experienced more of that eternal rest of soul, which Christ has so impressively promised, and so dearly purchased. We shall then, when the sacrifice is complete, thoroughly experience the promised rest. God be thanked ! these eyes have witnessed the trial with many, how from the beginning of their conversion and calling, they have made an abundant entrance. O how rapidly did such souls break through ! how soon did they attain also to the blissful foretaste of divine love, and of the rest which is found in the blood of Christ and in the love of God. Such souls are often perfected in a short time, since the Lord translates them, in peace and tranquillity, from time into his eternal rest.

Thirdly. If we are desirous of finding the rest of our souls in life, and of fully attaining to it in our dying hour, we must found our faith and our godliness wholly and solely on grace. This is a very important point, which we may not pass over ; but I will, this time, only touch upon it briefly. I say, then, if we are desirous of finding the eternal rest of our souls in this life, and of possessing it fully at death, we must found our faith and our godliness solely and exclusively upon grace. Souls that give themselves to God, from an entirely honest heart, and entirely depart from all things, obtain after such a departure, during their first love, a sweet foretaste of the favour,

loving-kindness, and peace of God, much light, and various divine communications. In this first love, they are active in love, in their walk, and faithful in every respect ; they also deny themselves, faithfully and sincerely, in a variety of things ; but, meanwhile, something secretly insinuates itself, so that they frequently take too much pleasure in the sweet communications, delights, relish, and gifts, which they receive from God, found their faith upon them, and their rest of soul, and suppose it will always continue so. But because God sees that the soul places too much confidence in its felicity,—its good and beautiful state, its light, gifts, and sensible enjoyments, and builds upon them—he withdraws the feeling of such sweetnesses, and the view of its faithfulness, in order, by so doing, to humble, purify, and lead it again into a state of naked dependance upon grace. The individual then becomes uneasy and perplexed, supposing, that with the loss of his previous feelings, he has lost the favour of God, nay, even God himself, whom he can no longer love with so much sensible emotion, nor adore with such heartfelt relish. He loses, at the same time, all courage. Though he had been formerly, during his sensible enjoyments, a hero, so that he could say with David, “I shall never be moved :” he is now terrified at the sight of his foes, so that he is again ready to say with David, “I shall one day fall by the hand of Saul.” I cannot believe any more, all is now lost !

• O my friends ! let us therefore confide and build

in all things only on grace, and not on our faithfulness, not on godliness, not on certainties and assurances, but simply upon divine grace.

Souls that are really converted, never depend upon their own fidelity. In their own eyes they are never sufficiently faithful, never sufficiently pious, never sufficiently holy; they would gladly be every day still more faithful, pious, and holy; and if this is not the case with us, our conversion is not of the right kind. But such faithful souls may be the first to fall into the weakness of supporting and establishing themselves, a little too much, on their fidelity. We ought therefore always to suffer ourselves to be led back into pure grace. We must seek to walk, with equanimity, in the ways of God, and not so easily let our courage fail, when it pleases divine wisdom to reveal to us, more minutely and profoundly, our misery and corruption; nor suffer our faith and confidence to depart, if God be induced, for wise purposes, to withdraw his sweetnesses, gracious communications, and sensible feelings from us. No! such souls as are so sincere in their intentions as I have described, so that they would gladly become every day more faithful, pious, and holy—such souls, I say, may proceed forward, with even steps, trusting solely to divine grace. It is reasonable they should remember, that it was mere grace, by which they were at first called by God. God did not call any of us, because we were pious and holy, or because there was something good in us; no, it was from mere grace, that he called us. For this very reason, we

ought to found our faith and our entire Christian walk entirely upon the free and unmerited grace of God. Those souls, that build and trust solely upon grace, pass their lives very peaceably in dependance upon grace ; they do not easily despond, when the weather is gloomy, when days are dark, when crosses and tribulations come ; nor do their hearts so easily fail them before their enemies. For what reason ? Because they do not build upon their human strength, or their own courage, but confide solely upon grace. Nor do they so easily despond, when they reflect on the holy and perfect walk, they are under such high obligations to lead before God, because they do not look at the same time at themselves, nor depend, in the least, upon their own strength, but expect all their help and strength from divine grace.

See, my beloved friends ! we may thus enjoy rest, eternal rest, the more uninterruptedly, when we let ourselves be led into an unconditional dependance on divine grace by poverty of spirit. Therefore, labour to enter into rest. It may be objected, that it is easy and convenient thus to let every thing depend on grace alone, and that this does not require the application of much diligence. But I can assure such a one, that before he departs from all that is his own, and learns to build, in a godly manner, on mere grace, all that is within him will tremble and quake. Self will despond and despair, and the man would rather toil himself to death, than seek his only refuge in God's free grace. Hence it is such a firm and

noble basis, on which the soul may remain in uninterrupted repose, and live in the Lord, and eventually be able, joyfully and cheerfully, to die upon it. From many of the pious, when they come to die, nothing but continued complaints are heard. But whence does this arise? I reply, that with upright souls, it proceeds frequently from looking back too much upon their infirmities, their weaknesses, their faithfulness and unfaithfulness, their holiness and unholiness. As long as we live here, we ought certainly to pursue after holiness, with all earnestness, otherwise our conversion is not sincere. Yet I say unto you, notwithstanding; ye sincere and upright souls! as an important warning, when you come to die, O plunge yourselves into divine grace! Certainly your piety will not then be able to tranquillize you, nor your fidelity delight you. Had I even the fidelity and holiness of all the Seraphim, still I would not venture to appear with it before God; for I should then find no entrance into eternal rest, and into the everlasting kingdom of God. By what means then? By mere grace. Let us close our eyes to ourselves, to our own doings, and to our own piety and righteousness. Let us only dwell more in the element of grace, and, by grace, we shall be tranquillized in life and be composed in death. From it we shall also derive the necessary strength in life, for the purposes of holiness and godliness.

Fourthly. If we desire to find rest to our souls in life, and enjoy it perfectly after death, let us labour to enter into a thorough denial of all outward,

temporal, and visible things. For temporal and visible things must be denied, if we are desirous of finding the eternal rest of our souls in this life. By outward, temporal, and external things, I understand honour, and respect in the sight of the world, human applause, wealth and property, and what is called being well off, house and land, furniture, clothes, and whatever is of an external nature; as also all other persons in the world, friends, acquaintances, and relatives; in short, all that to which the heart and inclinations of the individual can attach itself. All this must be denied and given up; if we are desirous of entering into the promised rest, and consequently into the joy of our Lord.

We must, on taking leave of these things, not only leave nothing behind, but also after our departure from them, not burden ourselves with any thing new. When the children of Israel had passed through the Red Sea, they entered into the desert. There they had neither houses nor towns, but dwelt merely in tents or tabernacles. There they could neither sow nor reap, nor procure themselves a variety of food. God indeed gave them manna from heaven, but they dared not collect, each time, more than they required for one day, and for each individual. The day before the Sabbath excepted; then they were ordered to gather double the quantity, because the manna did not fall on the Sabbath. Once, when they lusted after flesh, they were severely punished. Sometimes they were also in want of water, and the like. In short, they were obliged entirely to give up all those conveniences

they formerly had in Egypt, and content themselves only with what was necessary. Another and striking representation how we ought to conduct ourselves with regard to the things of this world, after our conversion, and after having left the world. At our departure, not a hoof must be left behind, nor the smallest thing, which we have not entirely renounced.

All that is not God, and does not lead to him, must be renounced ; for outward things cannot give rest to our souls, although they may deprive them of it, if we do not walk circumspectly. Many a one thinks perhaps, ‘ Ah, if I had only this thing or that, if I had only attained to this or that state, I should be able to serve God more quietly.’ O, man, thou deceivest thyself ! *It is not the possession of things, but the forsaking of them, which brings rest.* This experience will teach thee. Further, the rich farmer mentioned in the 12th chapter of Luke, had just such a fancy, when his land brought forth plentifully, it occurred to him to build greater storehouses, and then to say to his soul, “ Soul ! thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Take thy rest, eat, drink, and be merry ! ” Now, said the poor man, I can take my rest ; a proof that he had enjoyed no rest before, and consequently supposed, that because he really possessed that which he had so long wished for, he would be able to attain to the possession of rest. Thus we think also, that when we possess this and that particular thing, we will retire to rest, we will live happily, and serve God with a quiet mind. But all this is mere deception, even as this man was also

deceived. "Thou fool!" it was said to him, "this night shall thy soul be required of thee." For all things, which are external, not only the blessings of life, but also all outward things, do not harmonize with the nature of our souls. They cannot find either rest or life in them. The soul requires something spiritual, something, that, like itself, endures for ever. Outward things, and such as strike the senses, are transitory, and cannot afford rest to the soul, both on account of their short duration, as well as because of their inferiority in other respects. The soul must, at death, leave every thing behind! We cannot take any thing with us. Therefore how can outward things tranquillize us at a time when we must be deprived of them eternally? In one word, nothing external can give rest to thy soul. O how often do we see with sorrow, that many amongst us, on their departure out of spiritual Egypt, at their conversion, take with them such cumbrous packages, and so much of what is heavy! This cannot fail to occasion a very difficult and wearisome journey. We ought to travel as pilgrims, free and divested of every thing; much care and attention to the concerns of this life only hinders us on our path. Whilst others burden and tire themselves to death, let us live apart from all these things, contented with little, and using it only as necessity requires. He that earnestly seeks the rest of his soul, endeavours to make his bundle as small as he possibly can, that he may travel as a pilgrim.

Thus it is, that outward things burden and oppress

the soul ; whether it be money, or wealth, or honour, or any thing of an external nature. Instead of such like things delighting and tranquillizing the soul, they torture and torment it, and project it from one state of anxiety into another ; nay, they never let the man come to himself. An individual, who possesses so many things in the world, in which he seeks his joy and delight, and with which he plays, like a child with its puppets, is as variously distracted and disturbed in his mind, as manifold as the things are which occupy his attention, and in which he vainly seeks rest. In this situation, the poor heart cannot possibly attain to rest ; the rest of the soul, in this case, must necessarily suffer. On which account it is by all means necessary, that we steadfastly and magnanimously renounce all these things. For the mind is not only dissipated by them ; but when we continually enter into them with our thoughts and senses, the inclination to such things increases, so that the man becomes at length as if enchanted by them ; I mean, so captivated by and set upon them, that he can no longer rid himself of them. He becomes so blinded, that the most worthless things appear every day more beautiful, important, and amiable. His soul is, in a certain degree, transformed into that which he loves. Hence it is a common saying, " Money and wealth is all his soul."

O how many grievous instances are there of persons attaching themselves to some particular object with inordinate affection, so that they lose their senses and reason over it, and even commit suicide.

Are not these, therefore, dangerous things? and is not the state of such a man lamentable? His poor heart is held bound by so many fetters, and drawn into that which is external, as various as the objects are to which it adheres; and the firmer it cleaves to them, the more it is separated from God. For where that which is earthly predominates, God cannot reign; consequently neither rest nor peace can be experienced. For the smallest separation betwixt God and us, proves destructive to our rest and our peace. Hence it is, that many, who in other respects are not the vilest and the worst, unceasingly sigh and complain, that their path is so difficult, and that they constantly experience in their minds, such great and manifold uneasiness. My friends, you are far too much occupied; your heart, your pleasure, and your love is too much divided. You are immersed too deeply in outward things, and hence it is that you cannot rest.

Let us act, therefore, as pilgrims with respect to all outward things. It is not only money and property that disturbs and confuses the individual, but also the cares and desires after these or other things, to which the man cleaves with his heart, whatever names they may bear. All these things disturb the inward repose of the soul, and are the cause why the man never experiences eternal things, the things of the world to come; for the heart is scattered amongst a thousand such like things. Therefore, even as it fares with such people in life, so it will also fare with them, nay, even much worse, in dying and at death. Let us only seriously

reflect how it must be with such worldly-minded souls, when the message is brought to them that they must die, and when all that they have so highly valued and esteemed ; all that they have so ardently loved, and in which they have always so much delighted, yea, all that which constituted the true life of their lives—I say, when they have all at once to leave all these beautiful things, and nothing more to hope for from them for ever—must not this painfully pierce the heart? Must it not penetrate into the bones and marrow?

Therefore, my beloved friends! let us, by grace, magnanimously and steadfastly forsake all external things ; let us make our burden as small as possible. Let us possess that which we possess, as if we possessed it not, even as Paul recommends, 1 Cor. vii. 30. Let us make our hearts free and loose from all that is external, so that we may be every moment in readiness to part with it, and to surrender it with a perfectly resigned mind, in order that we may prosecute our journey to eternity without any impediment. O with what ease and alacrity does he walk, who has no burden to carry! An abstracted Christian, who has nothing to which his heart adheres, can live as free as a bird in the air. By this means, he attains, in a very complete manner, to the rest of eternity, re-enters into the friendship and fellowship of God, tastes the powers of the eternal and future world, and uses the things of this world with a holy abstraction, and without any attachment to them. Such abstracted hearts, who have thus

detached themselves from everything, find here, in this life, their eternal rest of soul, and will enjoy it perfectly after death. Dying is then no dying to them ; but they merely pass over with their spirit into that state in which they have already lived. Let us labour therefore to enter into rest, by the renunciation of all visible and temporal things, in order that we may become partakers in our hearts of the uncreated good.

Fifthly, we must not only renounce the things that are without us, but if we are desirous of finding the true and eternal rest in this life, and of fully attaining to it at death : we must also enter, by grace, into the denial of *ourselves*. Now, this is the most difficult point, and the hardest lesson. Then it is, as Satan said to God, "Skin for skin—all that a man hath, will he give for his life." (Job ii. 4.) For although we may think ourselves perfect in the renunciation of outward things : we are yet far from being so, with respect to the denial of ourselves. We often deceive ourselves also, and suppose we are really practising self-denial, when we are able to give up some particular things, to which our natural inclination is not directed. A covetous man may suppose he exercises the denial of pleasure, because he is no spendthrift ; and a voluptuary may imagine he is practising self-denial, because he is not covetous, and the like. When, however, the covetous man is no longer covetous, but becomes beneficent ; when the voluptuary becomes temperate, correct, and chaste, and when the proud man becomes humble, and when all this is from the heart, and not

merely in appearance : it may then be said, or at least hoped of him that, through grace, he has attained to the denial of himself.

But there are two ways in which we enter upon the denial of ourselves; the one actively, and the other passively. By the former, I understand, when by divine assistance, and the strength of grace bestowed upon us, we apply ourselves, on every occurring opportunity, to break our own will and intentions, to quench and tame our own evil lusts and inclinations, to restrain our wandering senses in hearing and seeing, in the pleasures of the palate, &c. Such like things are frequently passed over, under the pretence, that they tend to legality; although they are indispensable in order to attain to the promised rest. The Saviour not only says, "He that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple," (Luke xiv. 33.) but it is also his will, that we hate and give up our own lives. That is, that we not only gladly lose our own lives for Christ's sake, but especially, that we should destroy the life of our corrupt nature within us. This is pointed out to us by the offerings, and in particular, by the sacrifices of the children of Israel in the wilderness. These sacrifices were not only a type of Christ, but they also point out to us the mortification of our corrupt nature and its animal propensities, in order that we may become an acceptable offering to God in Christ, as Paul also expressly says concerning our bodies. (Rom. xii. 1.)

Many neglect also the mortification of their own will, on which however so much depends. They will have every thing according to their own mind and will. Their will must be attended to—must take place; because they imagine, that they know and understand better than others. Yet, my dearest friends! self-will continues self-will, even though it appears to will something good. When that which I will, is really good in itself: yet this does not therefore make my self-will good, so that it should on that account please God; no! all that I will from a selfish principle, all that I will with impetuosity, all that I will, in such a manner, as not to desist from it, is an evil and sinful self-will, which I must mortify, if I desire to attain to true rest. It is the adversary, who persuades and induces us to think, that we ought to remain thus firm to our own opinions, and our self-will, in order that we may thus gradually learn to resist even the will of God, and finally fall into pride, in which case, God must necessarily resist us. For “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.”

Such is also the case with reference to our anger. It is easy to believe that we must not be angry unjustly: but when there is the greatest right to be so, we believe that it is permitted us to be angry. But no, my dear friends! for the wrath of man, even in the most righteous cause, worketh not that which is right before God. Hence those, who do not mortify their wrath and anger, and do not earnestly seek to deny themselves in this respect: can-

not attain to the promised rest. For wrath deranges the mind, so that the individual cannot perceive, even in a natural manner, what is right or wrong; it brings the mind into disorder and confusion; it is then impossible to be at rest. Nay, an angry man cannot even possess outward rest and peace amongst men, since by means of his irascibility, he produces the same effect in them, and thus causes himself nothing but vexation and disturbance. O that men would seek to strangle this poisonous reptile, this pernicious naughtiness in its first birth, in order that they might attain to rest, and not deprive themselves for days and years of their precious and valuable peace! In the same manner, many are very slothful and negligent in mortifying the sensual lusts of the body. They give the body all that it desires, and a very immoderate degree of ease. What can be found of meat and drink that is only good and savoury, must be immediately sent for; never reflecting how prejudicial such things are to the rest of the soul; that the body, by such like tender treatment becomes lustful, but the soul enervated; that such like conduct is contrary to the doctrine of the Apostle, who enjoins us not to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. (Rom. xiii. 14.) And the same is the case in every other respect. O my dear friends! it is not by following our own will, but by breaking and denying it; not by yielding and cleaving to the cupidity of our corrupt nature, but by mortifying and overcoming it; not by letting the old man live, but by

crucifying and slaying it, that we attain unto rest. And in this we must not be slothful nor negligent, but diligent, and commence this diligence at the very outset of our conversion, and continue it steadfastly. It is because men do not strive and struggle earnestly, that they do not overcome, and hence they continue probably all their lives, self-willed, wrathful, and perverse ; uneasy, unhappy, and discontented characters. Now when such a man is laid upon a sick bed ; his self-will and unmortified desires serve as a scourge, with which he is most severely chastised and punished.

But we must also enter upon the passive denial of ourselves. By this I understand, that when God puts his hand to the work, to mortify us by affliction and suffering, we ought not to withdraw ourselves from it in any way, but rather love and embrace it, and endure it with patience. Man, in his natural state is so disposed, that he is unwilling to hear of affliction and suffering, much less taste any thing of it. But it were to be wished, that there were no such characters to be found amongst good and converted souls. Yet even amongst such, it is become too common, immediately to wish to get rid of all that which is only a little inconvenience, and does not exactly suit them. What is not just according to our own mind and taste, we wish directly to have altered and cleared away, that we may be at rest, because, in our opinion, it is an hindrance to us in that which is good. But this proceeds from nothing else, than from the unmortified state of our

nature, which would gladly continue ignorant of affliction and mortification, which seeks only an easy religion, in which it may not be so necessary to learn and repeat such difficult lessons, although Christ did not teach an easy, but a narrow and rough path, and entered upon and walked in it himself; and hence we never can, nor ever shall find rest, but in following him.

As long as the individual insists upon his own opinions, and his own will; as long as he does not embrace the cross with both arms, nor forsake the ease of nature from love to God and Christ, but continues to pass his life in his unmortified state, and does not deny himself: he cannot possibly find the rest of his soul, either here in this life, or attain it at death; on the contrary, experience teaches, that when such persons are laid upon a sick, or it may be, a dying bed: they are then in the greatest uneasiness; they want first one thing and then another; first this thing and then that is wrong; and they are dissatisfied, first with one thing and then another. Ah, my dearest friends! God, since the fall, has so ordered the present life, that nothing but tribulation is to be found in it, and that the rest of the soul is not to be obtained by avoiding the cross, but, much rather, by willingly bearing it; and on the contrary, that a man only falls into so much greater uneasiness, the more he seeks to avoid the cross. O let us therefore not flee from the cross, but embrace it; let us willingly bear it, and by so doing, tread in his steps, who so impressively invites

us thus to follow him, with the comfortable promise, that in this way we shall find rest unto our souls. That is a miserable rest, which can be immediately disturbed and thrown into confusion by any little outward circumstance. People think they shall possess rest, when every thing is according to their own mind and self-will. Ah, this is not the eternal rest of the soul; this is the false and mistaken rest of the flesh, which must soon be disturbed, and which we must deny. Hence, my dear friends! if we would thus deny ourselves, both in an active and passive manner, we should become true men of God, susceptible of the Spirit, and partakers of the divine nature, and should not only find and attain the rest of our souls, here in this life, but also when we come to die.

Sixthly, if we are desirous of finding the eternal rest of our souls in this life, and fully attaining to it at death: we must seek to walk, by the grace of God, in an entire dependance upon the divine guidance and direction. When the children of Israel were travelling to the land of Canaan, to the land of their rest, they were obliged invariably to govern themselves by the pillar of fire and cloud, which went before them. Soon after their arrival in the desert, the law was given them from Mount Sinai, which was to be the rule of their conduct. They were not permitted to go forwards, nor pitch their tents when and where they would; nor were they allowed, in other respects, to act as they thought proper: they were obliged to govern themselves, in all things, most minutely according to the divine

precepts, and to live, in every respect, in entire dependance on God and his will, before they could attain to the promised rest. Such must also be the case with us, if we are desirous of entering upon the true rest of our souls. God has also granted to his spiritual Israel, a fiery and cloudy pillar for their guide, in order that they may pass safely through the desart of this life. He has put his law into our hearts, according to which we must live and govern ourselves. But what is the fiery and cloudy pillar, which God has granted us, to which we are to look, and which we must follow, in order to enter into rest? It is Christ and his Spirit. The pillar of fire and of cloud was not only a type of Christ, but was Christ himself. The Angel of the Covenant was in this cloud, and went before the people of Israel, to lead and guide them. Now he must also be our guide. We must not form our religion either according to our own judgment or that of others, but according to the precepts of the divine word, and hear, not what this or that person says, but what the Lord says. We must seek to remain continually near our hearts, and be attentive to the operations of grace within us. Now when we feel, and are conscious in our hearts, that God desires this thing or that of us, or that he wishes us to do something or let it alone; we must continue simply by this testimony, not confer with reason, nor speculate upon it, and think, that religion does not consist in such things, that these things are only trifles; and that prohibiting them savours too much of legality; O, this cannot

be called depending upon the leading and guidance of divine grace ! In this way it is impossible to attain to rest. Much less ought we to look at others, and think, such and such a one does not walk so circumspectly, is not so particularly careful in these things, permits himself this thing or that. Soul ! what hast thou to do with others ? follow thou Jesus ; follow the attraction and the vocation of his grace in thy heart, otherwise thou canst not possibly find rest. A believer can often speak with certainty of a thing and say, it is the will of God that he should deny and give up this or that particular thing, but because it appears to be a trifle he passes over it, speculates upon it, and thinks it is only a matter of small importance, and exercises himself, on the contrary, in other things, which appear more important. But it avails not ; if we will enter into rest, we must follow the suggestions of the Spirit. We must show fidelity, when grace and the Holy Spirit require it of us, or we shall never be at peace.

We must, therefore, filially cleave to the guidance of divine grace, in child-like and simple obedience. If we walk in this manner, very near our King, if we keep our fiery and cloudy pillar, I mean Jesus Christ and his Spirit, before our eyes, we shall be led by him, from one virtue to another, and be brought to perfection in godliness. No man can so well inform us, what is the good, the acceptable, and the perfect will of God, as the Spirit of Truth, which is the Spirit of Jesus Christ, who reveals to us one truth after another : gives us more and more to

recognize the acceptable will of God, and by this means, makes us daily, more and more pious, godly, and holy, and consequently also more and more blissful and peaceful. For holiness and blessedness is one and the same thing, as is likewise holiness and rest of soul. The more holy we become, the more peaceful we are; and the more tranquil we become, the more blessedness do we enjoy in our hearts. Now the Spirit of Jesus Christ introduces us into this holy and blissful rest, when we continue near our hearts, and seek continually to walk as in the presence of God. By this means, the heart is led into a truly child-like disposition; which consists in being heartily desirous of pleasing God, of being acceptable to him, and of living so as to gratify him in all things. Now, if we please God, he also delights us, and imparts his peace to us, the inexpressible peace of God. Then we are enabled to walk filially and correctly before the Lord our God. Then our hearts condemn us no longer; but we have within us the witness that we are the children of God. The soul can therefore look forward without any apprehension to the time, when she must pass through death, into eternity. The Spirit of Jesus Christ, which she has sought continually to follow during life, will not forsake her at death, but be a strong consolation to her, and tranquillize her with the precious peace of God. Not as though any one were able or obliged, by fidelity and diligence, to merit God's glory, grace, and blessedness; no! but

a peaceable fruit of holiness and righteousness proceeds from it. Holiness is, as before observed, itself blessedness, and the keeping of the commandments of God is in itself a sufficient reward, in all that God requires of us.

Seventhly and lastly ; if we are desirous of finding the precious and eternal rest of our souls in life, and of fully attaining to it at death, we must labour to exercise ourselves continually in devout and spiritual prayer ; for prayer is one of the most approved means for this purpose. When the ark was lifted up and carried forward, Moses prayed, "O Lord arise, let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee !" and when it rested, he said, "Return, O Lord ! to the thousands of Israel !" In order that the children of Israel might pursue their way, unhindered to the land of Canaan, the land of their rest, and take possession of it ; it was necessary that their enemies and the Lord's, who opposed them, should be scattered ; in order that they might enjoy undisturbed repose ; it was necessary for the Lord to come to them and remain with them. Now what are the enemies of a Christian, that oppose him and strive against him, on the way to the heavenly Canaan, to prevent him from taking possession of it ? These enemies are the devil, the world, and our own flesh and blood. Now, in order to overcome them, and obtain the victory over them, we must pray. Who are those that hate God, that prevent us from adoring the true God, and from serving him in spirit and in truth ? They are again the

foes above-mentioned. They must also be scattered and put to flight. But how is this effected? By prayer. But when does the Lord come to us, and abide with us, and bestow upon us the true rest, both in life and death? When we worship and serve him in spirit and in truth. Our rest is solely to be found in God and Jesus Christ. Therefore, if we do not approach unto God by prayer; if we do not, by a continued introversion, abide in Christ, we cannot possibly feel any thing else within us, but uneasiness and confusion. Hence our dear Saviour well says, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," in the world ye cannot experience any thing else but disturbance and vexation, therefore abide in me: "in me ye shall have rest and peace." Therefore, when we live retired in Jesus, and walk continually, as in his most gracious and blissful presence, the mind finds rest and peace; it is then perfectly tranquil, it is then in its right place. But to this we attain by a real turning to God in prayer. For prayer is nothing else but an approach to that gracious God, who is present in us. When I draw near to God, God in return draws near to me, and in God is all my rest. Those souls, therefore, who often approach unto God by prayer, obtain a quiet heart; a heart, which is capable of experiencing the powers of the world to come; in approaching unto God, they are led to their right place; so that their spirits must often say, 'It is indeed the truth; I am now with my Father, in my own native country. I knew not, that rest was so sweet. Ah! how sweet

and agreeable it is ! how delightful is the rest in a quiet centre,' says such a soul.

By an earnest exercise of prayer, we are able to attain, in a high degree, the promised eternal rest of the soul even during the present life, as a rich recompense for all the tribulations and mortifications we have endured, if we would only truly apply ourselves to it for this purpose. O, he that has once experienced this eternal rest in fellowship with God, by means of the exercise of prayer—he that has once thoroughly and essentially tasted it, has sufficient courage, power, and strength to be able to persevere under a thousand afflictions ; and need not doubt in the least, that he will be admitted, through death, into the eternal rest of his soul. And why not ? He is, with his spirit, already there, where he hopes to be eternally ; he lives already in heaven, as Paul says, “ Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look, for our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

At the temporal death of believers, who seek to live here continually retired with God within, nothing more than the outward body and the inconvenience and wretchedness, which cleave to it, are taken away ; this then falls away, dies, and is laid in the grave ; but they themselves enter into the rest of the saints, according to the words of the Holy Spirit, when he says in the Revelation of John, “ Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth ; for they rest. Do you hear it ?—they rest from all their labours, and their works do fol-

low them!" Therefore, I conclude with the words of John in the second chapter of his first Epistle. "Now, ye children, partakers of the same vocation with myself, abide continually in him, that when he shall appear at the decisive hour of death, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming, but may filially hope and expect to be introduced, with him, into a blissful eternity and into everlasting rest."

I must now say a word respecting our deceased friend, who has just been laid in his resting-place. Our hearts and our brotherly love call after him, even in the grave, "May he rest in peace!" since as far as his knowledge extended, he was sincere with God, and with the salvation of his soul, and acted uprightly in the cause of God. From faults and weaknesses he was not free, any more than we are. This he well knew and sincerely lamented. Now, if the blood and merits of Christ have covered and atoned for them: our love ought also to cover them; and I hope in the infinite mercy of God, that even as he loved the people of God here, and fellowship with the children of God, that we shall eventually meet him again in the assembly and fellowship of pardoned sinners before the throne of the Lamb. He is gone before, and we shall soon follow after him. Let us therefore labour to enter also into that rest, of which we have been speaking; and fear, lest we should neglect the precious promise during the time of grace. To-day, seeing that we hear his voice, let us not harden our hearts! the

door of grace, the entrance to the eternal rest of our souls still stands open ; let us therefore give diligence, that we may enter therein ; for the slothful and negligent do not enter. Let us be diligent in self-denial, in prayer, in a holy life and walk, and in this way, seek to press into the rest of God, in order that whenever our hour arrives, we may lay down our heads in peace, and eternally enter into the rest, which Christ has purchased for us by his precious blood, to the everlasting praise of the free grace of God. Amen.

Now let us all fall down in Spirit before the Lord our God, give him the glory, and most humbly beseech him, as the source of all good, graciously to confirm every thing, that has been spoken according to his will and word.

PRAYER.

O thou majestic, holy, exalted, and most adorable Lord and God ! thou incomprehensible Being ; who dwellest and retest in thyself in thy serene eternity, infinite all-sufficiency, and perfect blessedness ! We worship thee through thy Spirit ! O wonderful God ; thou art happy in thyself, thou needest neither angels nor men, nor any other creature ; and yet thy free and eternal love hath formed us, poor children of men, that we may participate in thy blissful rest and thy divine glory, and enjoy it with thee to all eternity. When by our lamentable fall, we had departed from this rest, thou didst give us thy Son ;

O thou lover of mankind and wonderful God! the Son of thy love, that, by the shedding of his precious blood, he might again acquire for us that rest, which we had lost, and by his resurrection, might re-open the entrance to eternal rest. Thanks be unto thee, O Lord! for this thy incomprehensible, thy unmerited and unspeakable love! Thanks be to thee, O thou long-suffering lover of the human race! that by thy kindness, thou hast hitherto preserved our lives; that we have not been snatched away by sudden death; and translated out of temporal into eternal restlessness! O Lord, our God! what would have become of us, had we died, without experiencing thee and thy rest in our hearts! What inexpressible misery would that have been! But thou, the compassionate friend of man, hast borne with us, in order that we might reflect upon that which belongs to our peace, our true peace, and to our complete repose in time and eternity. To this end, thou causest the way to thy peace to be preached unto us, and for this purpose, thou art still recommending unto us the Prince of peace, that Joshua, who must bring us to the so dearly promised rest. O Lord Jesus! let not thy precious gospel appear of little value to our hearts, nor be a fruitless message to us! O let all those immortal souls, that have hitherto passed their lives in false security, and lived in their natural peace, with an unsusceptible heart and conscience, be savingly disturbed, that they may learn heartily to long after thy rest. Let them be sacredly troubled, in order

that thou mayest eventually eternally comfort, rejoice, and delight them. Ah Lord! there are, indeed, many whom thou hast called by the holy and powerful word of thy gospel, and hast led into the path of eternal rest; but how few real pilgrims are there to be found amongst the awakened and the called! O do thou powerfully influence their hearts, that they may be entirely and undividedly devoted to thee, and wholly renounce every thing that is displeasing to thee, so that their poor hearts may no longer continue oppressed and secretly disturbed. Search, O Lord! and try my heart, and the hearts of all of us, whether we walk in the truth or not, and whether we are found sincere or false in thy sight. Lead us, O Lord, into thy pure grace, that we may not build and depend upon our own fidelity, our own piety, and our own righteousness, nor upon any thing that thou thyself art not! Give us a humble mind; make us poor in spirit, that we may entirely depart from all our own righteousness, and learn to cast and immerse ourselves in the lap of thy grace; that we may lose and forget ourselves, and all our virtues, light, and gifts, in order solely to possess thee in faith. O do thou dwell in us, that we may not be moved away by any of the powers of unbelief; but may continually look directly to thee, to thine infinite grace, to thine almighty and wonderfully guiding grace, resign ourselves to thee with closed eyes, and faithfully follow thee, the Lamb, whithersoever thou goest. O that we may be conducted, more and more, by this grace, into the

renunciation of all the visible things of this world! We know, and daily see, how soon and suddenly we must forsake all these things. Grant us, therefore, thy grace, that we may henceforth voluntarily forsake them, before we are compelled to abandon them; that we may timely take leave of them, and close our eyes against them, in order to occupy ourselves solely with thee and with invisible things, and be enabled to follow thee, our God, as true pilgrims, in thy strength. O burst every bond! Take every thing away that oppresses us, that we may be enabled to go forward freely and unobstructedly in our way. Thou knowest how many a heart is fettered, even against its will. O thou, who didst break through every obstruction, have mercy upon us, and burst the bonds, by which we are fettered! Make thy children free, that may be able to walk before thee, as they that are free. Lead us also into the true denial of ourselves, and into the love of thy holy cross. O do thou thyself crucify our nature, our self-will, our wrath and concupiscence. Crucify our senses, and all that is of nature, so that when we feel and experience such powers, even against our will, they may be nailed to the cross, and finally be slain and exterminated, by the power of thy Spirit. O dearest Saviour Jesus! give us also in particular, a fervent, calm, and praying heart! O that by the true prayer of the heart, we may be more and more introduced into the true life of the spirit, and live no longer according to flesh and sense, but according to the spirit! that, as thy priests,

we may pray without ceasing, and present unto thee our sacrifices in the sanctuary of our hearts here in time, until thou shalt bring us to our rest in eternity, where we may adore and worship thee without end, and offer up an unceasing hallelujah, with all the saints and elect in heaven, unto thee, the Lamb, who hast redeemed us. Amen.

ON THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

Glory to God in the highest: Peace on earth, Good will to men!

It was with this heavenly exclamation of joy that the multitude of the celestial host incited the shepherds to a devout celebration of this festival. O how animated and active were these blessed spirits in glorifying God! - How willing were they to minister to us children of men, and to publish to us salvation! How they rejoiced at the great joy, which was brought to us as on this day! O that we might in some degree partake of their animation! Would to God, that their song of praise and joyful acclamation might awaken our slothful hearts from all their drowsiness; recall our thoughts and senses from all their wanderings, and awaken us to sacred devotion, and to consider what God has done for us children of men!

Seeing, therefore, that wherever the birth of Christ is preached at this season, with power, there Christ himself is present, and his holy angels with him: let us present ourselves before him, as in the presence of the divine child Jesus, who humbled himself for our

sakes, but is now supremely glorified; and most humbly beseech his divine assistance and blessing upon our intended meditation.

PRAYER.

O most holy, and most blessed Trinity, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, let all that is within us humbly bow and worship before thee! Let all our hearts inwardly praise, love, and give thanks unto thee, that thou, O Father, hast loved us, and given us thy Son; and that thou, O Son of God, for our sakes, wast born a poor child, in the manger at Bethlehem; that thou hast vouchsafed to grant joy unto us, poor wretched inhabitants of this lower world, and hast deigned to be born, here on earth, in order that thou mightest help, redeem, and conduct us up to heaven. O Lord Jesus Christ, let this manifestation of thy wondrous love be ever deeply impressed upon our hearts! Thanks be unto thee, O Immanuel! for having so interfered on our behalf as to be born in a manger! Thanks be to thee, for having caused the precious gospel, the glad tidings of thine incomprehensible love to man, to be published unto us, who were dwelling in the midst of the heathen nations! But, O dearest Immanuel! let us also become partakers of the fruit and power of thy birth in our hearts. We thank thee for having granted us another Christmas-day, in which we may again adoringly call to mind thy gracious love to man, for our mutual edification and encouragement.

O Lord Jesus ! what will such seasons, as the present, avail us, unless we essentially become partakers of thee, and of the power of thy birth in our hearts ! O how many such like days have we spent, alas ! fruitlessly, undevotionally, and even perhaps in sin ! Yet do thou not, on that account, withdraw thy favour and kindness from us. Bless this opportunity, which thou art granting to us, to the end that we may be incited and inflamed by thy love, and may adore this amazing manifestation of it.

Lord Jesus ! who didst come upon earth, and hast granted to the inhabitants of this world thy clear light, O meet with us, at this time, that we may, by faith, behold thee present, by faith adore, and by faith powerfully experience thee in our hearts ! O dearest Immanuel ! Lord Jesus Christ ! we must be mute when we reflect upon thy wondrous love as manifested in thy birth ; when we contemplate the mystery, into which angels desire to look, and yet are unable to penetrate through, or to fathom what is implied in the Word being made flesh, and God in human nature dwelling upon earth. O let our dark understandings therefore be enlightened by that divine glory, by which thou didst shine upon the shepherds, in the plains of Bethlehem ; and didst grant them such a joy as filled their hearts and all their powers ! O let our hearts be also thus irradiated, and give us to look, as through a cleft, into thy wondrous love, that we may all be incited by the consideration of thy love, to love thee in return, and to resign ourselves to thee in reality !

O thou divine child, who didst lie in a manger, humble our proud and lofty hearts by thy humiliation, that they may also apply unto thee, and seek grace, while grace is to be found ! O dearest Immanuel, who didst condescend thus low, invite all those that desire after thee, even such as are timid and fearful, that they may, on this occasion, be powerfully encouraged to venture, to turn unto thee, to pay homage to thee anew, and salute thee, to receive thee as their one and their all, and devote themselves to thee. Hear now and answer us, Lord Jesus Christ, and let not thy gracious presence be turned away from us, on account of our unfitness and unworthiness ; but may thy name be glorified by us, and in the hearts of each of us ! Amen.

We will select, as the subject of our meditation and edification, the words, which you will find in Isaiah ix. 6, where the prophetic spirit thus speaks :—

“ Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given : and the government shall be upon his shoulder ; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”

The words which the patriarch Lamech spoke, concerning his first-born son, Noah, may be applied, my beloved friends, with greater propriety, to the birth of our Saviour:—“ This same shall comfort us,

concerning our work, and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." (Gen. v. 29.)

Since the fall, there is nothing on earth but toil and labour, or labour and sorrow, as it is more properly expressed. Not to mention the toil and labour which a fallen child of Adam has in the work and business of his outward vocation, in order to support himself and those dependent upon him, and to provide for his vile body ; not to mention the toil and labour, the pains, vexations, and misfortunes, which are constantly succeeding each other in this wearisome life ; not to mention all the misery we have to expect from without, seeing that we are exposed to all the inconveniences of the elements, to cold, heat, lightning, hail, and all kinds of tempestuous weather, war, and pestilence ; not to mention all the toil, and labour, and pain, which every one has to endure in his body, by illness, by calamities, either personal or relative, by the fear of death, and all that which may come upon him ; nor even to mention all the toil and travail, labour and pain, which his own inordinate passions occasion a fallen child of Adam, by wrath, by self-will, by self-seeking, by hatred, by envy, and by a thousand other such like vexations : I say, without taking notice of these, we will at present consider chiefly the cause of all this, which is come upon us by the curse ; I mean, a restless and dissatisfied heart, and an evil conscience, which every one carries about with him, who is not reconciled unto God in Christ.

O what toil and labour, and how painful it is to live in the world, with a dissatisfied heart and a disturbed conscience, and when we find nothing right in the world ! If the man begins one thing, he soon wishes to commence something else ; and the first is left undone ; he is continually flying from one thing to another, in order to find consolation, pleasure, and satisfaction. But when once an individual in his state of nature, returns to himself, and to his own heart—when his restless conscience only awakes a little—when he is once brought to a stand, so that he is led to reflect upon a long and endless eternity ; that moment all his joy is, alas ! again at an end. Such, my dearest friends, is the toil and labour, according to the expression of the patriarch Lamech, which has resulted from the curse, the consequence of sin.

Now what is able to comfort us in this our toil and labour upon earth. “ This one,” says Lamech, “ shall comfort us in all our toil and labour upon earth, which the Lord has cursed.” A man of the world, when experiencing uneasiness, weight, and oppression in his body, in all his toil and labour, as well as the thousandfold burdens, distresses, and vexations of this life, seeks to comfort himself in his own manner. The children of this world, in the first ages before the flood, at the time the patriarch Lamech lived, built themselves cities, learned a variety of arts, or as our dearest Saviour briefly describes it, in Luke xvii. 27. “ They ate, they drank, they were married and given in marriage ;” this was their business, in this they sought their consolation, by these things

they endeavoured to divert themselves, in order to avoid feeling the distress, anxiety, and restlessness of their tormenting consciences. Alas ! it is of no avail ; for, as said before, the individual flies from one thing to another, and the heart continues dissatisfied. It is just as if a costly purple robe, embroidered with gold, were put upon a person labouring under a painful disease, in order to expel the pain ; ah, how useless would such a remedy be ! Woe and anguish sit deeply in the heart and conscience of the dissatisfied individual, who is still unreconciled with God, and continues under his displeasure ; nothing external can comfort him, much less avail him.

What then is able to help ? The children of God act like the patriarch Lamech :—" This same shall comfort us, concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." God's children acknowledge, and believe from the heart, that all the toil and labour they have in this life, in whatever way it may befall, has its foundation in sin, and in the curse arising from sin. Hence they willingly humble themselves under the mighty hand of God ; they look at the thing as a course of penitence, by which they are to be humbled, abased, and drawn away from what is evil. And not only so, but they seek also, as already observed, their consolation with Lamech, from the right source. " This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands upon earth."

It cannot, however, be doubted, that it happened to the patriarch Lamech as it did to our first mother

Eve, when she was driven out of paradise, and felt, for the first time, the uneasiness and toil which is consequent upon sin; no sooner had she brought forth Cain, her first-born son, than she said, "Now I have gotten a man from the Lord;" this man will restore all again. This was certainly a great mistake with respect to Cain; however her faith, the eye of her faith looked to the man, to the Messiah, whom she had in view. And when Lamech says concerning his son Noah, "This same shall comfort us in our labour and toil upon earth, which the Lord hath cursed:" it may be, that he also thought respecting his son, that he was the Messiah. Be that as it may, his faith had regard to the Messiah; to whom he looked, as to the only one who could comfort; as the only one who could again restore peace to the heart, and lead it to God; as the only one who could again pacify and satisfy the uneasy and troubled conscience.

This ought also to be our employment on this day of Christ. The true child, the true Noah, that will receive us into the ark, is now preached unto us; and he it is that was born at Bethlehem! This same shall comfort us in all the labour and toil, which we have upon earth! O ye children of men! you may seek consolation from any other quarter you please, but you will not find it. Do you seek consolation in the honours and dignities of this world? Ah! they are only splendid vanities and merely imaginary! Do you seek consolation in the good things of this world? Ah, they are only golden snares which entrap the soul. Do you seek consolation in the lusts, and

transitory enjoyments of earth? They are only an enchanting poison, by which the soul is slain, and the uneasiness of the heart and conscience increased. Who then shall comfort us? The answer is contained in the words of our text: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace!"

It is now, beloved friends, Christmas. The world celebrates Christmas in its fashion; but Christians in a different manner. The world celebrates Christmas, for the most part only, for the sake of appearance. As long as a man is unconverted, he knows not much more about it than that he puts on his best clothes, and prides himself upon them; that he cherishes his flesh in particular in eating and drinking, and that, alas! often to superfluity. One friend visits another; they invite one another to be each other's guests, and treat each other in the best manner possible.

My dear friends, when I look at the words of our text, it seems to me that our dearest Saviour is likewise desirous of preparing for us a Christmas feast; we are for once to enjoy ourselves; we are also to be entertained by this Friend; and in these words there is placed before us,

I. As the first course, the most gracious incarnation and birth of Christ.

II. As the second course, his glorious godhead.

III. His royal government, as the crowning course.

Come then, my beloved, eat, drink, and be abun-

dantly satisfied with all the good things which we possess in our new-born king, Jesus Immanuel, born in Bethlehem.

O Jesus ! awaken our hearts, and collect the desires of our hearts, that we may receive into our hearts, not only sound and words, but power from thy truth. Amen.

I.—We behold, first of all, in the words of our text, which have been read in your hearing, the most gracious humanity of our beloved Saviour, born at Bethlehem, which is signified to us in these brief words, "Unto us a child is born."

O what a sweet and nutritious aliment, for the refreshment and consolation of every hungry, every humbled, every poor and timid sinner ! A child incites us to love and confidence. Nothing is more needful to a man, in order to be saved, than that he assume a cheerful confidence towards his God and Saviour, to love him, and to be happy in his love. By nature we have all any thing else but this in our hearts. In every fallen and still unconverted child of Adam, fear and timidity reign. Ah how fearful, how full of uneasiness is the human heart, even when only thinking of God ! There is no love, no confidence towards God, our gracious God, in the human heart ! The very boldest of men, even those that are called choice spirits in the world, who are desirous of being thought heroes, when once they are brought to a stand, on the brink of eternity, and when they reflect that they must now die, and make the

transition into an endless eternity: Ah! how do they despond! how fainthearted are they then! Men, indeed, profess, with their mouths, that they love God; but why are they so afraid of him? Are we able of ourselves to love and trust in God? No! we cannot love and trust in God, without Christ and his grace operating in our hearts. God condescends to us; but if he did not do so, and we had to appear before the glorious countenance of God, with such fearful hearts, desponding minds, and timid souls, how utterly abashed and confounded we should feel!

Fear manifested itself in man as soon as he was fallen. For no sooner had our first parents sinned, than they hid themselves in the garden, at the voice of God. When Cain had sinned, he thought every one would lay hold of him. Nay, even the pious themselves, if they are not established in faith and in fellowship with God, often evidence despondency enough. For when the holy angels appeared in heavenly glory to the shepherds in the field, they were obliged to encourage them; "Fear not," said they, "we publish great joy unto you." Now, if an angelic form, if angelic radiance is able to cast a person to the ground—how much more the glory of the Majesty of God!

But I say that God has most deeply condescended towards us. God comes to us in human nature; he comes to us as a child, that we may take courage and feel love towards him; that we may not despond, but let ourselves be aided and healed by his assumed sacred humanity. God might have come to us in his

glory ; he might have come to us in the very brightest radiance of his purity and holiness ; God might have come to us with the sword, and with the scales of his justice ; what would then have become of us, and what would have become of us without Christ, my dear friends ! But God comes to us as a poor child ; God became a child ; he comes entirely unarmed ; he comes clothed with our poor, weak, human nature ; he comes in the most gracious, the most innocent form ; solely that we should not be afraid ; solely that we might hear what he had to say to us, and what he had to operate in our hearts. For to this end does our dear Saviour present himself to us, in his assumed humanity, at this season, as a child, to show that he will associate with us in a child-like manner ; he presents himself to us as a child, that we may not run away from him ; and he is willing to effect all his works in our hearts in a child-like and supportable manner, in order that he may again raise us up from all our sorrow and wretchedness, and that we may be again brought into fellowship with him.

“Unto us a child is born.” Ah, unto whom is it born ? To us—unto us, this child is born. It is true, this is, in the first instance, preached unto us, who are believers and pardoned souls. It was said to the shepherds in the field, “to you is the Saviour born.” To the rest, who were living securely at Jerusalem in their sins ; to Herod with his whole stately court ; to the Pharisees and Scribes, with their mere literal knowledge of the Scriptures ; to the rest of the Jews, who built solely upon their temple, their rites

and ceremonies? To such characters it was not first announced; Ah! they had no need of Jesus; they had something very different to occupy them. An infant! O this was to them much too mean an affair! It was first announced to shepherds, to hungry souls; yet still, it was said to the shepherds at the same time, that this joy should be unto *all* people. God, in his impartial love to man, excludes no one, who does not, by impenitence and unbelief, exclude himself.

Now, sinners ought reasonably to take this to heart. "Unto us a child is born." O sinner! approach this child; thou mayest now find grace. God will not go to work with thee, as a judge; he will not deal with thee as a holy God; but in his artless, unarmed, poor, and lowly childhood will he offer thee his grace. Q come, therefore, all ye poor sinners! not only those who are so outwardly, but also, in particular, ye who are become poor and humbled sinners, and who would gladly come, but are still like timid children, and think in your timidity and fearfulness that ye dare not come.

Observe, my dearest friends! it is a child, which is presented to you, as the object of your faith. Draw near, therefore, to this child. You need not make yourselves pious and holy. Draw near to him, as he draws near to you. Methinks I see the divine child, lying in the manger, with his friendly, gracious, and smiling countenance, with his weeping little eyes, with his kindly moving lips, with his stretched out hands, with his most artless childlikeness, beckoning

to us poor sinners, and timid children, who gladly would, yet dare not, that he may constrain us to come to him, and as though he were saying, "If thou wilt but come, I will receive thee; come and bow thyself before my couch, I will not deal harshly with thee; I will forgive thee every thing, thou mayest treat with me in a child-like manner; and thou shalt find grace, but only on condition, that thou humblest thyself, confessest thy transgression, and receivest me as the sole object of thy choice." "Unto us a child is born." We must not think, 'Ah, my sins keep me back, my sins are too great! I dare not come; the child Jesus has no reference to me; the son of God is in the child; I dare not take such a step!'

Now, O soul, ruminates upon these words, "Unto us a child is born," still more intently. Hast thou heard them? "Unto us a child is born." This child did not come straight from heaven, and laid itself in the manger of Bethlehem; no, the child was really born, and God has really assumed our nature in this child; "the word was made flesh" in this child. God has condescended, in an incomprehensible manner, to our degraded humanity; he was born in our human nature. By this birth, he entered into our human family (if I may so speak), he has become, by this birth, our near relative; he is become our brother. O this is a word, to which we may well add a *Selah*! and it requires a whole eternity to adore and venerate this greatest of all wonders, that the only Son of God, by his incarnation, has descended into our humanity, has become our brother,

has wholly and entirely taken upon himself our misery, and brings with him into our human family, all his heavenly riches : so that now, the very poorest sinners may find, possess, and enjoy, in Christ Jesus, all that they need, to rejoice their hearts, both in time and eternity.

Christ, by his birth, has become our brother. Let us in connection with this, remember the law, which God gave (Lev. xxv.), to the effect, that when any one amongst the Jews became poor, so that he was obliged to sell his property, house, land, and all that he had, and thus was entirely impoverished : his next relative was obliged to ransom him ; and such a redeemer, who was called a Goel, was obliged to redeem him from all his debts, and cause all his property to remain in the family. Job speaks of such a man in the xix. chapter of his book, 25 verse. "I know that my Redeemer liveth," my Goel liveth, and therefore, although I am a poor man, and although I am grievously oppressed with debts, yet I have a Redeemer, he will redeem me.

Now see, my friend ! thou who sayest thy sins are too great ; yes, my sins and thine require such a man, such a Redeemer ; otherwise nothing would ever have availed us. If a man had come to redeem us, what would that have done for us ? None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him ; for the redemption of his soul is too precious. (Psalm xlix. 7, 8.) 'Though all the treasures of kings and emperors were offered, all would not avail to redeem a single soul. An empe-

for, a king, a great monarch, with all his kingdom, cannot save his own soul. Even were an angel to descend from heaven, he would not be able to redeem or save a single individual, much less the whole human race. But now, a child is born into our family, a child, who is the Son of God in truth. Now, by virtue of his birth, he takes upon him all the debts of those belonging to him; by virtue of his birth, he is our Redeemer, who has taken upon him all our sins; from the first moment of the birth of our Saviour, I regard him, even when lying in the manger, as the Lamb of God, which has taken upon it my sins and thine, and those of all the world. O what a Redeemer, what a brother! O my dear friends, we may have and find all in him. If we only unite and betrothe ourselves to him, in faith, we need no longer say, "My sins are too great!" here is a way of escape from them, when they really oppress us. Were we even the most poverty-stricken beggars, so that we did not possess, in our hearts, even the smallest particle of God and his blessings, yet our brother brings us every thing with him from heaven, when he is born in our human nature. Faith may then truly exultingly say, "Unto us a child is born." O what fidelity is here! Jesus, thus born for us, takes all our transgressions upon him, he assumes our misery, he is willing to restore our lost inheritance to us, and to bring it effectually and really into our hearts; willing to make us partakers of all his divine riches, if we only seek to unite ourselves cordially with him, by faith and love. Ought

we not heartily to love our brother in return, who has thus loved us? Ought we not highly to esteem his friendship and fraternity, even above every earthly blessing? Better to have all men as enemies, than not to have him for a friend. Ought we not to endure and hazard all things, for *his* sake, who has done so much for us, and yield and resign ourselves to our brother, as his property?

Further, "Unto us a child is born." This child had been promised some thousand years. Faith looked to this child, and expected salvation from it; but ah, men did not then possess it. Many saints and prophets had prophesied of the Saviour, but still so obscurely, that it could scarcely be understood, nor its object ascertained. Abraham, a father of the faithful, who was privileged above others, had seen the day of Christ; yes, he saw it, but still it was afar off; it was still very remote. But believers may now triumphantly say, 'The child is now born—the Son is now given—he has now appeared, we can at present possess him, and we need nothing more.' O grace! O great grace! which is so little known, and so little appreciated, that we possess, in our days, the gospel of a Saviour, who has, in reality, already appeared and manifested himself. All the saints of the Old Testament rejoiced in hope; but they did not obtain the promise; we may have it; we may possess it; for what reason? "Unto us a child is born; unto us a Son is given!"

O my dearest friends, ought not this to make us

ashamed, that we are notwithstanding so slothful, and that we do not give more diligence, in order to become really, essentially, and vitally partakers of him? We see now, that it is true, what our dearest Saviour says of the king; who prepared a marriage-supper for his son, and sent forth his servants, at the time of the marriage, to say to those that were bidden, "Come, for all things are now ready!" See! thus it is also at present; these words are this day fulfilled before our eyes; the Lord has now really prepared the marriage feast for his Son; we need not wait for any thing further; the child is born; we are now all to be invited. Come, now, for all things are ready! nothing further is required, than that we come and take what is provided and offered us in Christ.

O beloved friends! how disgraceful it is, that we are notwithstanding so slothful, that we are still so lukewarm! It is true, many will reply, we are willing; but it is not yet the proper time. If God would give me grace, says slothful nature, I would also gladly come! Just as though it depended upon God. No, dear soul! the table is covered, the child is born, thou needest not wait for any thing more; all is at present ready; thou canst have it now, if thou wilt only approach unto him, in a penitential manner, and if thou comest with a hungry heart, thou mayest inwardly become the recipient of the child. We can, at present, still find him in the grace and favor of his loving-kindness, and as one who will receive us, and not upbraid us; he is

willing to receive us all, and to reconcile and conciliate all. But why are we not willing now? Will such a festival, as the present, be afforded us in the world to come? Will it then be published to us, that "unto us a child is born? Will Christ still appear to us, as a child, on that day? I think not; he will then appear as a Judge, with the multitude of his heavenly hosts. O sinner! sinner! do not delay thy repentance! Approach unto him as to a child, before thou art compelled to approach him as a Judge. O it will be then much too late!

But let no one think, I am not living in the age in which Christ was born; that event happened so many centuries ago; how can I therefore now partake of him as a child? If thou art really in earnest to become a partaker of him, thou canst as really and certainly become so, as the shepherds and other believers at the time, who saw him, saluted him, and kissed him. Christ is "the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Isaiah, whose words we have taken for our text, lived about 800 years previous, yet still he says, "Unto us a child is born," as if he already possessed it. Thus faith also acts; it regards every thing, the future as well as the past, as if they were present. But we can now use these words much more appropriately. The prophet necessarily saw through a dark veil; the fact has now really taken place; we know that it has occurred; the child is really born, it has been in this world; nay, what do I say? It is still in this world.

Christ has never laid aside his childhood or his human nature. He has indeed ascended, in his glorified human nature, to the right hand of his heavenly Father, but in such a manner, that he is still with us, as our Saviour, our Immanuel, God with us, always, even to the end of the world. He is now much nearer to us, we can find him much more essentially, now that he is glorified, than at that time, when he was in his state of lowliness, in the manger at Bethlehem.

Yes, dear friends, all of you, who are partakers, with me, of divine grace, we can all of us now embrace, love, adore, and enjoy him, with the arms of our faith and love, and with the affections of our hearts, as inwardly and as closely, as if we had been present, with the shepherds, in the manger at Bethlehem. Let this therefore suffice, respecting the nutritious food afforded us by his human nature, his gracious incarnation.

II. We now come to the consideration of the second part of our subject, presented to us, in the contemplation of his divine nature ; of which it is said, in the words of our text: "Unto us a Son is given !"

'A child, a child !—might reason think and say ; —what need is there to make so much noise about that ? Are not children born every day ? A child, a poor naked child—can this be my Saviour ? Can it help me ? O no !' Ah dear reason, do not mis-

take the child ; in the child there is more than thou and any natural eye can see. In this child is really the Son of God himself ! a *Son* is given us in this child. This child is Jesus Christ, the Lord from heaven himself ; the whole fulness of the Deity has descended into this child, and dwells bodily in this child. The heart and love of God, nay, what do I say, the Son of God himself, in whom the Father, from one eternity to another, has all his good pleasure—this very Son is in this child, and united with this child, in a manner incomprehensible to us. He that seeth this child, this Son, seeth the Father in the Son. O what do not those see, who are able to see this ! That eagle in the divine life, I mean the Evangelist John, says, “ We saw his glory, his excellency, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John i. 14.) All this may be found in the child. Because this child is united with the Deity, on this very account, the actions of this child, in his incarnation and birth, as well as what he afterwards performed—I say, all the actions, all the tears, all the sufferings of this child, are of infinite value, and of infinite merit for our poor immortal souls. All the acts of this God-man, Jesus Christ, are divine acts ; because he was united with the eternal divinity ; because he was not only a child, but a Son ; all the tears of this child are divine tears ; all the sufferings of this child, are divine sufferings. A single tear, a single drop of his blood, which he shed for the first time, is suffi-

ciently powerful to blot out my sins and those of the whole world, O blessed are those hearts, to whom the Son of God is given !

“Unto *us* a *Son* is given.” To whom then is he given ? I boldly say, to all those, who are heartily desirous of possessing him ; and no one can do this, unless the grace of God incite him to it. Now, if thou art heartily desirous of him : he is in reality given and presented to thee by his heavenly Father. In this child, in this Son of God, thou possessest also his infinite merits, all his perfections, and the fulfilling of the law. All that he has done, that is good and holy, he did for thy good and all that he has suffered, he has suffered for thee ; all this is thine ; if thou canst only embrace and love this child in faith.

Further, “Unto *us* a *Son* is *given*.” This is the sole basis of our adoption, and of divine life in our hearts. We could never become children or sons of God, unless this child, this Son had been given to us. Adam was a son of God ; he had the light and image of God, in and upon him ; but through sin, Adam died ; although he was obliged to live nine hundred years afterwards in misery. He died. But in what manner ? God and all divine light, life, and peace, departed from him ; the image of God was obliterated in him. He died. He was without God, and without the life of God, after his sinful fall. And in this state, we are all born, without God, without the life of God, without the divine image, without the divine virtues, and without the

possession of any thing divine. Nor could this miserable and wretched state be repaired by any other way or means, than by God's thus sending his own Son ; by his replacing the heart of his love, the essential life of love in our fallen human nature, yet all without sin. The Son of God must necessarily become man, and become our property. In this union of human nature of the child with the Son given, lies again the pledge, and likewise the foundation, of the only means by which we can again be made partakers of the adoption, and therefore of God himself, and can again partake of divine light and divine peace ; nor will there ever be any other way or means to be found. Now, as assuredly as God has given us his Son, as at this time ; so certain is also the possibility of us, poor children of Adam, being restored from our state of death, and made partakers of the divine life. In this child, every thing is included ; we have only to unite ourselves with him in faith ; and God will then impart to our poor hearts, in this child and Son, whom he hath given us, his divine light, life, and peace.

O dearest friends ! what grace, what blessedness is comprised in this present ! All this is *given* to us. "Unto us a Son is *given*," all that is else required is, that we receive him. He must be received. I must really receive him in faith, and partake of him in my heart. Ah ! what would he otherwise avail me ! Seeing therefore, that he is thus given to us, my dear fellow-mortal ! take him while thou mayest ; otherwise thou wilt eternally remain without the

light and life of God, and without any sufficiency for any thing that is good. No one can live piously, no one can live godly, no one can practice real and perfect virtues, unless he derive them from this child, and from this Son, who is given to us. O we must unite ourselves, by faith, as poor, naked, helpless children, with this child, receive him by faith, and then we shall become happy people.

We must receive him, ye believing hearts ! Why are we then so unbelieving and wretched, as if no Son had been given to us ; as if no child had been born ? If it is true, that God has really given us, in his Son, his divine light and life, and every grace, to enable us to become his children, and to bring forth good fruit : why then are the king's children so poor ? Why do the children continue so wretched and complaining ? The table is covered ; the Father has spread it ; stretch out therefore the hands of faith in a better manner, and take, more assiduously, what is set before you. The Son is given to us, and with him, every grace, which is requisite for life and for godliness. We may find, in him, the good that we need, and obtain every virtue, which we are unable to produce of ourselves. O my dear friends ! let us therefore take what is presented to us ; I mean, let us exercise ourselves more in prayer ; exercise ourselves more in approaching to him, in the light of faith ; exercise ourselves more in steadfastly cleaving to our Immanuel, in order that we may become, increasingly united unto him by faith ; so that, as infants at the breast, we may receive grace for grace, as we require

it in order to please him. Ah ! he seeks to form us, himself, according to his own heart. The likeness to him, which was lost in Adam, is now completely restored in this child; from him we may now all receive, according to our measure, and become children of God, and well pleasing to him.

There is yet something precious comprised in these words, "Unto us a Son is given." In this Son, and in the gift of this Son, we have also again the pledge, the foundation, and the only means of attaining to re-union with God, and to the indwelling of God in our hearts. The purpose of God, in creation, was, that the human heart should be the dwelling place of the most adorable majesty of God, and God's temple and throne, in which he would manifest himself, in which he might glorify himself, and in which he was desirous of being served and worshipped in spirit and in truth. But alas ! by the fall, the temple has become desolate, and an idol temple; it is no longer a house of prayer; but is become a den of thieves. Ah ! what an appearance does the human heart present ! If we had eyes to see, we should be terrified at our own form. The temple has been laid waste. The Lord, indeed, occasionally appeared to the patriarchs : but that was in a very outward manner ; and no sooner had he thus manifested himself, than he again withdrew. God dwelt afterwards in the temple of Jerusalem ; he was there majestically present in the most holy place ; but ah ! it was a long way to go for many, who had to travel to Jerusalem, to seek

God. The Son is now given to us, the temple is re-established. The eternal Deity, the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in this child; unto us the Son is given. The divine glory, which formerly dwelt in the temple at Jerusalem, has descended into this divine child, in order that through this child, it might again impart itself to us, in our hearts. Therefore, "he that hath the Son, hath the Father also." Of this Son, it may now be said, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men!" The divine Majesty now dwells again in man, not only in a human form, but Christ has assumed our humanity; unto us the Son is given; through Christ, we may and ought to become partakers of all this felicity.

O let our faith, therefore, encourage itself, and reflect on the high purposes, which God had towards us, not only in creation, but also in the gift of his Son! In his Son, he is willing to prepare us to become again his temple, in which he may inwardly dwell and manifest himself. We are now to possess God no longer at a distance; but we may have him near. We must no longer seek him externally; we may now seek and find him, possess, adore, and enjoy him, quite near us, in our hearts. He is become thus near, thus unspeakably near to us through Christ. Ah! my dear friends! accustom yourselves more to this; seek Jesus in your interior. This is the greatest wonder of all the wonders of the grace of God; it was necessary for him to approach to man through such a Mediator, otherwise we should have been unable to bear the near approach of God

to us. But now we may become really and essentially partakers of his divine indwelling in our hearts. God is willing to come, dwell, and reign in our hearts, and glorify himself there, in all his divine attributes; he is willing to make himself known to us in our interior. O then, let us highly value this inestimable grace! Let us therefore seek, in this manner, to celebrate a real Christmas. As surely as Christ was born, as at this season, in Bethlehem,—as surely as his divinity descended into our assumed human nature: so surely will and ought Christ to be really and truly born in our hearts. He is willing to impart himself to us, really and essentially. What would otherwise all Christmas day savail me, if I were unable to find and possess Christ in my heart?

Beloved friends! how little is this taken into consideration! Most men serve God only externally; they seek him externally; they please themselves externally with their outward means and ceremonies; whilst the heart continues far from God, and nothing remains with them of Christmas. "Unto us a Son is given." This is the true Christmas gift. What do we carry away with us from Christmas? Have we too embraced the Son? Have we become partakers of him? How is it with our hearts? What appearance do they present? Is the cradle of the Lord Jesus there, or do they still only serve as a habitation for animals? Ah, my dear friends! let your hearts pity your state. If we have not Christ in our hearts, what will become of them? When we come to die, what will it avail,

to have all kinds of comfortable things rehearsed to us, whilst the heart is devoid of Christ, of his life, his light, his love, and of inward fellowship with him! No, nothing will hold good, nothing will suffice to comfort the poor heart, that dies without Christ. O what grief and sorrow of heart is then felt!

Listen therefore to the gospel: "Unto us a Son is given." O if thou wert even the most miserable individual in the world; if sin, Satan, and death, dwelt in thy heart, thou mightest still be saved; unto thee a Son is given. Through the Son is offered unto thee God's light, life, and grace. Christ himself is willing to cleanse thy heart, and come and dwell therein. Such great promises being given to us, ought we not therefore, in the words of Paul, to come to the following conclusion? "Having, therefore, these promises—that God will come, and dwell, and walk in us,—let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Yes, my friends! clear out your hearts from your sins, from the world, and all its vanities; for Christ is willing to come and be born within us. O that it might not be said also of us, "There was no room found in the inn!" Receive him, therefore, into your hearts, that he may dwell therein. "Unto us a Son is given;" if we will not accept and receive him now, we shall eventually eternally repent of it.

Again: "Unto us a Son is given!" O glorious festival! "If the Son is given to me, I have then

a certain pledge that I shall surely not fail of heavenly and eternal felicity. If God has given me his Son : he will also give me all things with him. He will certainly not deny heaven to me, if I have only Christ in my heart. He that has Christ in his heart, has already the seal in his heart—nay, what do I say ? he has already heaven in his heart. He that possesses Jesus, has enough of heaven. He, into whose heart, the child, the Son is given by God, has really and actually the kingdom of heaven within him. For the primitive fathers say, that Christians, by faith and humility, get Christ into their hearts ; and thus we may have heaven in our hearts here on earth.

How lukewarmly therefore do we live ! Why do we continue such unhappy creatures ? We may become happy people from this time, if we only receive the Son of God, who is given us by the Father ; if we only make room for him in our hearts, and entirely resign ourselves to him. Where Jesus is, there is joy in the heart ; where Jesus is, there is light in the inner man ; where Jesus is, there is power and life ; where Jesus is, there every thing is filled with joy and blessedness. And if it be occasionally obscured by crosses and sufferings : yet it is not of long continuance. When, in the hour of death, the veil of eternity is drawn aside to the believer, he may venture with this Immanuel, with this Benjamin, (if I may so speak) to appear before Joseph. If he has Jesus within him, he can say with Simeon : " Lord now lettest thou thy servant

depart in peace ;” I am now in possession of the true Son ; I have now the child of my heart ; I can now depart in peace to a blissful eternity.

III. Time is advancing ; we will therefore be brief, and only mention in a few words, something of the crowning course of his royal government. “ Unto us a Child is born ; unto us a Son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulder.” The government is upon his shoulder ; upon whose shoulder ? Upon the shoulder of the child born, and the Son given, who was impressively called, even by the heavenly hosts, “ Christ the Lord.” Therefore, if the government is upon his shoulder ; there is an end to the Devil’s kingdom ; sin is now cast out ; all other usurpers have now nothing more to say.

Listen and take it to heart, all ye that are weary of the Devil’s service, who have long been the servants of sin : the government is upon his shoulder, upon the shoulder of the Child. You need not continue, a single moment longer, in such bondage ; another is born to us, a Son is given to us, whose government is upon his shoulder. This is the crown Prince, who has a right to the crown ; the others are false usurpers, who have no right to possess our souls. Jesus alone has that right. By his regal and ruling power, we may become free from all the service of sin, and from all the dominion of sin, of the Devil and his slavery. Ah, what is a man, so long as Jesus is not his king ; so long as he does not

inwardly recognize him as his Lord in truth. Is he not a miserable mortal, a real slave of Satan? Ah! the man probably thinks, when thus living according to his lusts, that he is only doing what came into his mind; but know, O man! thou art Satan's slave; he has bound thee with a chain; he draws thee after him; he drives thee from one sin to another, and thou art no longer thine own lord and master. O if we could perceive who was Lord in our hearts, how terrified should we be! But now there is one born, the true Prince is born, who has the government upon his shoulder; he will take the soul's part; he will no longer permit it to do the will of Satan any more. No man is now compelled to do the will of Satan any longer; not a single individual, except he who voluntarily lets himself be held in captivity, is obliged and constrained to serve sin any longer. We are not debtors to sin, says Paul: we may now be free. Christ, by his incarnation, and by the merit of his incarnation, has ransomed us from all other masters; we may and ought therefore to yield ourselves up to him.

Now, my dear friends! if you are weary of serving other lords, come hither; this Master is willing to engage you in his service. Come and give yourselves to your rightful Lord; receive him, swear beneath his banner, render your homage unto him. Honor and revere this rightful King, who has a right to possess you, and to rule over you.

We need not be afraid of the devil, nor of any temptations or terrors. No, my dear friends! do

not make the devil omnipotent. When evil thoughts occur to you, when trials and temptations arise, which often appear truly devilish ; be not so fearful of them, if you do not voluntarily enter into them, when they become a cross and cause of suffering to you. Assuredly, the Devil only makes a pretence, he only seeks to terrify us, to make us afraid, like little children are terrified. He has now nothing more to say ; the government is upon the shoulder of our divine child Immanuel. When we are devoted, with body and soul unto him ; the devil can do nothing to us, even although he come upon us with the whole multitude of infernal spirits.

But beware also, my dear friends ! of the vain fear of man ! If Christ has the government on his shoulder, the world has therefore no longer any authority over us, and consequently we need not fear it any more. For many a one is apprehensive, and says to himself, if thou act so and so, thou wilt make such a one thy enemy ; some other person would not endure thee any more, thou mightest be despised ; thou mightest perhaps not make thy way in the world ! Ah, my dear friend ! Christ has the government upon his shoulder. He has the hearts of all men in his hand ; he guides every thing as it ought to be guided. Trust him then for a morsel of bread ; confide your life and health to him. What more is required, than to be a subject of him, who can so preserve us, as that not a hair can fall from our heads, without the gracious will of his love. The law has also nothing more to say to -us with

all our sins. When our evil transgressions occur to us, and God's tribunal is set before us : we must not have any thing to do with our sins. Christ has compensated for every thing. We have nothing to do, but to submit ourselves to our King, to pay homage to him, and to cleave unto him ; we may then approach unto God, with filial faith and confidence, in the sweet and beloved name of Immanuel. We need fear nothing ; for the government is upon the shoulder of Jesus ; and his government is a very different one from the governments here on earth. It is true, that earthly governments, as far as they are of divine appointment, afford a very pleasing representation and delineation of the government of our dear Immanuel, Jesus. All the emperors, kings, monarchs, and great men of this world, however, receive something from their subjects ; and when they have no subjects, their government signifies little. But our dearest Saviour Jesus needs no subjects, needs no excellence from others ; he has all excellence and majesty in and upon himself ; and besides this, he renders his subjects happy with himself ; he makes them all kings and priests, heirs and joint heirs of his kingdom. All this is given to us : " Unto us a Son is given ! "

To be brief ; the dominion of Jesus consists in redeeming us from sin, and from the unhappy dominion of sin and Satan, by the power of his grace ; in protecting us against all the enemies of our souls—Satan, Sin, Death, the World and all that assails us. The government of Jesus consists in really redeeming

us from indwelling sin, in imparting to us, by the Spirit of his grace, divine life, light, and virtues, and in making us, by this means, pious, holy, lovely, and acceptable people in the sight of God, if we only cleave unto him, and make room for him in our hearts. To this end, he enters into our hearts, as into his kingdom, there to dwell, reign, live, and govern. Thus a believer has nothing to do but to walk in filial reverence, before the face of his reigning king, and shew himself entirely obedient to him, in body and in soul.

Come then, my dearest friends! Let us go to Bethlehem. Let us employ this day in solemnly paying renewed homage to our king; let us salute him in his cradle, and swear anew the oath of fealty to him, saying, Yea, O Lord Jesus! thou hast been given to me; I accept thee, and present thee, in return, my heart and my all, for an eternal possession. Let us not divide our hearts, any longer, my friends! for this is the reason why we experience so little of the dominion of Jesus in our souls. Alas! we divide our hearts. We are willing to possess Jesus; we are willing to have him for our King; yet we follow the Lord only a little, and nature and the world a little. But we cannot experience in this way the blessedness of indwelling grace. We must become entirely subject to him; our heart must be his property; our will must be humbled and subjected to his will and good pleasure; our body, our souls, our senses, our mental powers and faculties,—Jesus must live and reign in them all. We must no longer

use any thing according to our own good pleasure, and our own impulse. No, those that are true Christmas souls, who are become Jesus's property—have done homage to him, and sworn allegiance to him.

Now, my dearest friends ! let us, on this day, as already said, renew, in a solemn manner, our covenant, and the offering we have made of ourselves; anew submit and resign ourselves to our royal king and crown prince, and swear fidelity to him, by the assistance of his grace to cleave to him, and to serve him all our lives long.

Come also, all ye who have hitherto been such miserable creatures as would not that this Man should reign over you. Ah, receive him ! Christmas days are still granted you, of which you may now take advantage, because they are still afforded you. O humble yourselves now, and pay homage to this child, that will gladly receive you into favour, and, as his subjects, make you temporally and eternally happy. Subsequently, he will rule much more strictly ; he will then no longer reign with the golden sceptre of his grace, but you will be dashed in pieces with the iron sceptre of his wrath, with which he will subdue all his enemies, and all those who will not be the subjects of this Jesus, the child born, this King of heaven and earth.

But as for us, who are become the subjects of this child Jesus, this king of heaven and earth, let us walk circumspectly, as in the presence of God. Let us walk, that many others may be induced, by our walk

and conduct, to become with us, happy people. In us, men ought reasonably to be able to see, who has the rule and government in our hearts ; who it is that dwells in our hearts, and that we are so happy with our Immanuel. If the government is upon his shoulder, ah ! it ought to be the wish and desire of our hearts, that by our walk and testimony, many may be brought near unto him. For the world will not always continue as it is at present ; it will not always be the case that unrighteousness and impiety shall have the upper hand. O no ! these words, “ The government is upon the shoulder of Jesus,” shall yet be fulfilled, in their full import, in the last days. Jesus will fully assume the government over the hearts of men, even in this world. Thousands shall still be converted ; all people and nations shall bow before his divine majesty, as prophecied in Psalm lxxxvi. 9. “ All nations, whom thou hast made, shall come and worship before thee, O Lord ! and shall glorify thy name.” Heaven and earth shall again utter the exclamation sounded forth in Rev. xii. 10. “ Now is salvation and strength, and the kingdom, and the power become our God’s and his Christ’s ; and he shall rule and reign for ever and ever.” Amen.

Let us now, to conclude our present meeting, fall down before God, heartily thanking him for the preaching of his blessed gospel, and beseeching him to grant us the power of his Spirit in our hearts.

PRAYER.

O Jesus Immanuel, God with us, God in the midst of us, God in our hearts; who art, at this moment, sitting on the throne of thy glory, and who dwellest amidst the praises and adorations of so many millions of angels, seraphim, and cherubim, and amidst the hallelujahs of so many blessed souls! we consider and contemplate thee in faith, as now born, in the manger at Bethlehem for us, in the form of thy humiliation. O Immanuel, enable us to worship thee in spirit and in truth, that all that is within us, may bow before thee! From love to us, thou didst become man, although thou art God, and possessest, in thyself, all divine glory. All that behold thee, adore thee. The wise men, who came from the east to thy manger, where thou wert born, adored thee. The shepherds, on finding thee there, worshipped thee. O let our inmost souls, and all that is within us, honour thy incomprehensible love to man! O we cannot comprehend it! we must step backwards astonished, and exclaim, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou thus visitest him?" O dearest Immanuel, let us inwardly recognize and experience what a sweet and refreshing nutriment is to be found in thy humiliated human nature for poor sinners. We now thank and praise thee for having so cordially taken our part, and for having given us, in thyself, thine eternal Deity in thy humanity, that we, poor lost sinners,

might again be raised up from perdition. Thou didst take upon thee our sins, together with all our misery and woe, and hast brought unto us all the blessings, riches, and treasures of heaven. O Jesus ! may our hearts, may the hearts of all now present, experience, feel, and reverence the importance of this great subject, that praise may be prepared for thee, both by our mouths, as well as by the mouths of babes and of sucklings, both now and in an endless eternity !

We thank thee, Lord Jesus, that thou hast opened thy liberal hand on this occasion, and hast satisfied us with a feast of fat things, by which our souls may be refreshed, nourished, and excited to love and serve thee. O Lord Jesus Christ, do not let us continue cleaving to the mere sound of words ; but let our faith, the hunger of our hearts, and our ardent love be incited to seek thee, and to find thee in our inmost hearts ! O Immanuel, God with us ! let us not celebrate our Christmas without thee, as we have alas ! so frequently done. O Lord Jesus, grant that each of us may receive a blessing from this festival ! Nourish our souls with the dainties which thou hast placed before us on thy table, and art still willing to set before us, in order that our hearts may be inwardly refreshed by thy vivifying word, and encouraged to give themselves up to thee for a possession.

Are there any here, O Lord Jesus ! who have been hitherto at a distance and strangers to thee ; are there rebels here, who have hitherto refused to

acknowledge thee as their rightful king? O make them subject unto thee! Humble their proud, obstinate, bold, and daring hearts! Didst thou not assume our flesh and blood, and wast thou not unwilling to scorn even the most wretched? O then, do not despise us on account of our wretchedness and insufficiency! Thou hast not only taken all our sins upon thy child-like shoulders, but hast also a glorious power, by which thou canst redeem us from the dominion of sin. Do not endure it any longer, thou Sovereign king of glory, that the hearts of men should continue detached from thee, and that strange powers should possess them to thy reproach; detach them from the dominion of Satan; tear them away from sin, and let especially the hearts of thy people, and my heart, be rendered entirely subject to thee.

May all our affections be dedicated to thee, O thou child Jesus, in the manger! to love thee alone, with our whole heart, as long as we live. To thee we present our will, and all that we have, to become entirely thy property. We resign all right and power over our own will. Do thou rule, do thou command! Let us direct our inward and outward life according to the guidance of thine eye.

Dearest Immanuel, we offer unto thee, in thy state of childhood, our body and our soul; do thou make use of them, even as thou hast given us thy body and thy soul, thy humanity and thy divinity, as on this day. Now, we are entirely thine, dearest Jesus! O accept of us also, that we may blissfully experience,

that we are no longer our own, but belong to our Lord and King Jesus. Let this be a new day to us, in which we take thee afresh to be our King, pay thee homage, salute thee, and submit ourselves to thee ; in order that we may employ the remaining moments of our lives, by thine assistance, solely in thy love and fear, and in thy service.

Manifest thyself, O Lord Jesus ! not as an absent, but as a still present Saviour. O communicate to the hearts of thy children, of thy poor believing people, who appear to be still so destitute ; communicate to our poor hearts, thy divine light, thy divine life, thy virtues, and all that thou hast brought with thee for us from heaven, in order that we may become real children, who resemble thee, who may be acceptable to thy heavenly Father, and prove edifying and pleasing to our neighbour.

We unite in faith, dearest Immanuel, with all thy children, who this day proclaim and listen to thy love, wherever they may be, in the whole world, in the church, or at home. O how many thousands are present this day, with their hearts and devotions, at thy cradle, who love thee, who behold thee, and who honour thee, and glorify thy name ! We unite in honouring thee with all their praise, and with all their devotion ; our inmost heart says, Yea, and Amen to it ! O let us now sit with all these ; O let us sit with all thy children at thy table, from henceforth even for ever ! Amen.

CONCLUDING ASPIRATIONS.

Amen. Hallelujah to God the Father, for having loved us, and given us his Son !

Hallelujah to the Son of love, the child of his Father's bosom, to the dear Immanuel, who has not despised us, but has deigned to visit us poor mortals with the radiance of his glory, and with the rays of his loving kindness !

Hallelujah to the Holy Spirit, and may he glorify Jesus Christ in all our hearts, that we may praise and glorify thee, our God, thee the Holy Trinity, to all eternity, for the wondrous love thou manifestest towards us the poor children of men !

O Jesus Christ, thou Son of God at the right hand of the Father, lift up thy priestly hands from thy sanctuary, and give us thy blessing. Powerfully say unto my heart, and unto the hearts of all us, "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee ; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee ; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace !" "

THE NAMES AND TITLES OF CHRIST.

May the sluices of divine mercy and love to man, which opened themselves so widely in the incarnation and birth of our dearest Saviour to the children of men, be extended unto us poor sinners, in grace and blessing, now and in the hour of death ! Amen.

Beloved friends, notwithstanding I have suffered much from weakness, during the night, yet still I feel myself inclined and impelled, according to my promise of yesterday, to meditate with you upon the remainder of the words of the text I then discoursed upon, and refresh myself with you, at this table of the Lord. Nothing more is requisite in the matter, than that we believe a little more, and that we turn to God a little more cordially, in order to expect grace and blessing from him, and not from men. Let us therefore, first of all, incite our hearts to this, by singing a few verses of a hymn, and then elevate our hearts to God in prayer.

PRAYER.

Adoration, love, praise, and thanksgiving, be ascribed unto thee, thou ever-blessed and only-be-

gotten Son of the Most High God, who, from love to us, didst become a poor child in the manger at Bethlehem! Be thou magnified by all that we have and are, for thine incomprehensible love and condescension! O deign to grant us more and more of the knowledge of thee and of thy divine love! O Lord Jesus! we hear and speak, and sing, and read, at this season, so much of thee, of thy love, and of thy condescension and birth; but ah! how little art thou still known, even amongst those, who are called Christians after thy name! O how little art thou sought, recognized, honoured, loved, and found in the hearts of men!

O dearest Immanuel, suffer us not, suffer not our needy hearts, as we are here present before thy face, on this last day of the feast, suffer us not to go away hungry; let us not be sent empty away from this Christian festival, but be visited, refreshed, blest, and edified by thee in our hearts! Jesu! thou wast wont, in the days of thy flesh, to seize gladly every opportunity, in order to gain admittance to the hearts of men, and offer thyself to them; on Sabbath days and feast days, thou didst appear in the synagogue and in the temple. O Lord Jesus! do thou therefore seize this opportunity, and the present time, that it may be to us a season of grace and salvation. Behold, here is also an assembly of immortal souls, whom thou hast so dearly purchased with thy blood; souls, for whose sake, thou didst forsake thy glory, and didst appear in such lowliness. O Jesu! manifest thyself therefore in a lively manner; manifest

thyself as present in our midst, that we may be blessed of thee anew, and be enlightened with the light of thy vital knowledge in our hearts.

O Lord Jesus! we are now assembled here to listen to thee and thy word; direct our minds and affections to thy sweet and heavenly doctrines, that our hearts may be entirely drawn away from earth unto thee. Thou knowest that our knowledge and understanding is enveloped in darkness, unless the power of thy Spirit fill us with light; thou thyself must work in us that which is good, in word and deed. O thou reflection of glory, light of light from God, and born from the light of eternity, prepare us all for the reception of thy blessings; open our hearts, our mouths, and our ears, and let, O Lord Jesus! our prayers and supplications and praises prove acceptable in thy sight!

We read, once more, the words of our text—a part of which we have already treated upon—in the sixth verse of the 9th chapter of Isaiah, where he, who is justly called the Evangelical Prophet, thus proclaims the gospel of salvation.

ISAIAH IX. 6.

“Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”

“Taste and see how good the Lord is!” It is thus the prophetic Spirit in David, exclaims in

The good that is to be found in God, in our dearest Immanuel, is a *heart-rejoicing* good. All the delights, all the false good things of this world do not touch the heart; all these are only something that flatter the senses, a transitory illusion of the sight; their enjoyment is only superficial; it does not reach the deepest ground of the heart. But God, and the delights which Jesus gives and imparts, are heart-rejoicing sweetnesses and blessedness. When Jesus, after his visible presence, was about to depart from his disciples, he asked them, whether they had ever wanted for any thing? They answered, 'O no! never!' and yet they were frequently so destitute, as to be compelled to pluck the ears of corn. Why did they reply in this manner? They had experienced and enjoyed so much delight and so much satisfaction in Jesus, and in his society, that they did not once think of outward circumstances.

The good that is to be found in Jesus, is not only a heart-rejoicing good; but there is also in Jesus *heart-cementing* sweetness, cordiality, and loveliness. The world indeed has also its objects, which, as it were, enchant the heart; that is, as if people could not do without this and that particular thing; but it is only a kind of enchantment; they might easily be delivered from it, if they would only resign themselves entirely to God. But in our precious Saviour there is such heart-attracting, heart-affecting, heart-cementing loveliness to be found, that the heart of him, who has become acquainted with Jesus in his heart, and has tasted and enjoyed him in his soul,

is so firmly united to him, that he neither can nor will forsake him eternally. The Lord's disciples once fell into various trials and siftings (even as it still occasionally happens to all believers), as we read in John vi. and on this occasion, Jesus asked them, if they would also go away? But Peter answered, saying, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." They had probably been a little perplexed; what Jesus had been speaking upon, was hard for them to digest; but yet they would not forsake him. Ah! our dearest Saviour often brings his people into all kinds of bitterness and darkness; but though the soul may, at such seasons, complain ever so much, yet if the individual be asked, if he will return to the world? the answer is, Ah, no! God for ever preserve me from doing so! Such heart-cementing, heart-inciting loveliness is to be found in Jesus Immanuel.

The good things, which are to be tasted and enjoyed in the Saviour, who was born for us, are such sorts of delights, as never bring disgust with them, and with which we shall be neither tired nor satiated to all eternity. Alas for the poor world! If she happen to possess a puppet, with which she amuses herself for a few days, she becomes all at once tired of it, and will have something else; but even then, she cannot take pleasure in it long. O what a miserable life, spent, so to speak, in hopping from one thing to another, and never attaining a happy state! But he that really finds, tastes, and enjoys Jesus in his heart, is never weary of him to

all eternity. The longer we live in this world, the more does the world and all the visible things of this outward life appear dead to us; so that when a man is old, the relish for first one thing and then another, falls away from him; nay, at length, every thing becomes indifferent to him. And although the individual does not possess grace, yet it is wont thus to fare with him. But the very reverse is the case with the children of God; their Saviour, and the things he communicates, becomes more and more dear and precious; the more he is enjoyed, the more we hunger after him; the more we drink of him, the more we thirst after him; the older we grow, and the nearer we approach to eternity, the more precious does Jesus become, the more dear and estimable is our Immanuel to us. O are not those permanent delights and abiding virtues, which are to be found in Jesus? Angels, cherubim, and seraphim, have found their delight in Jesus Immanuel for so many thousand years, yet they are not become weary of it, and will not be weary of it for a thousand eternities. Choose, therefore, permanent delights, my dearest friends!

The goodness, friendliness, and loveliness, which are in Jesus, are *inexhaustible* riches, of which there is no end. If one were to pourtray the world, with all its glories, in the best manner possible, and even invent something to add to it, yet the discourse would not be a very long one; for there is really not much to be found in the world. He that has looked over the whole, must say, there is nothing to be

found in it. But it is very different with our Jesus Immanuel. Ah, were we to speak of his goodness and blessedness, of his love, and the blessings which we may have in him, from one day to another, nay, through whole eternities, we should never arrive at the end of it; and when we had spoken of them a thousand years, we should say, we had not even touched upon them.

Dearest friends! I speak thus for this reason. In the present day, there is, God be praised, much spoken, heard, sung, and read of the everlasting love of God our Immanuel. We have yesterday, God be thanked! also touched upon this mystery; I say, touched; for do not think, that we have exhausted it; far from it! We have said much, but not yet all that God gave us to see; and what he thus gave us to see, was scarcely a drop of the inexhaustible ocean of the eternal love of God revealed to poor sinners in Jesus Immanuel; it was scarcely a drop of the great and inexhaustible ocean of sweetness, blessedness, and loving-kindness, which is to be found in Jesus.

Having, therefore, yesterday, by divine assistance, treated upon the commencement of these words, we will now proceed to serve up the rest. The Lord, yesterday, prepared a feast for us, from the former part of this verse; there is still, so to speak, the desert remaining; with which our dearest Lord is willing to grant us a real refreshment, derived from the gracious name of him, who was born our Immanuel; when it is said, "Unto us a child is born, unto

us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called (as he is in reality) Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

We have no occasion to divide these words ; we will, therefore, only feed upon them, one by one, with the divine assistance and blessing.

"The eyes of all wait upon thee, O Lord ! give us, therefore, our food on this occasion ; unfold thy liberal hand, and refresh the weary ; strengthen the weak and the faint, and satisfy the hungry with thy good things." Amen !

These words by no means present to us all the names, qualities, and excellencies that are in Jesus. Beloved children have many names ; but none has so many names and perfections as our new-born babe at Bethlehem. His first name which is here presented to our view, is called *Wonderful*. What is this intended to teach us ? and to what purpose shall we apply it ? I answer, that we may become children in devotion and simplicity of heart. Christ is wonderful in his person ; wonderful in his divine perfections, beauty, and loveliness ; wonderful in his form ; wonderful and incomprehensible in his ways and guidance. It is just as though our dearest Saviour had said to us by the prophet, thou must leave thy reason out of the matter ; it is much too wonderful for thee, thou canst not see through it, thou canst not comprehend it.

Christ is wonderful in his *person*. We see at Bethlehem a little infant ; this infant is the eternal

Son of God, manifested and given to us children of men. Who can fathom this? O reason, be still! The sea is here much too broad, and greatly too deep; thy discernment and speculation can here find no bottom. When we reflect upon the love to man, which God has manifested towards us in the birth of Christ, in this infant at Bethlehem, is it not wonderful? God, who possesses every thing in himself, and requires neither the services of angels nor of men, condescends so far as to become a poor child; who can comprehend this; is it not wonderful? Hence it is certainly the case, that the more a man seeks, with his natural and rational powers to enter into any particular mystery of God, the more he stumbles and falls at every turning.

That which is wonderful in the person and incomprehensible in the philanthropy of Jesus Christ, incites us loudly to a child-like devotion. Now, if I give a long description, and travel far and wide with my reason, to search out how this is, and how it can be, that God and man are in one person, what nourishment does my spirit derive from it? If I make a great circuit and reflect what has induced God to give his Son to mankind, and how every thing flows down to man through him; the more I try to search into this, the more obscure does it become to me; it is too wonderful; I can find no bottom in this depth. Now, I thank my dear Saviour that he is wonderful, and is called wonderful; and with this I am satisfied. He is wonderful in his person; let me but become a devout child, that most humbly bows before him, and

worships him ; heartily astonished and rejoiced, that there is such a depth in it, that neither I, nor all men, nor the angels themselves, are ever able to comprehend this mystery, either in time or eternity. O, this mystery would not be of such value to me, if it could be searched out ! nor would any of the mysteries of God be so dear to me, nor would they be divine, if every one could comprehend them. A mystery proves itself to be of divine origin, only when all human reason must be silent before it.

This, my dearest friends, ought also to teach us, when we read or hear of divine mysteries, in the Scripture, or elsewhere, that we ought only so to hear or read, that we may live thereby, that our souls may be edified, and that we may be incited to devotion and to the glory of God, and induced to love our Saviour. We have then learnt and attained already the whole contents of the Scriptures. But we must always read them devoutly, and in true childlike devotion. If our gracious God gives us here and there a morsel, we must heartily thank him for it, and not cast it away ; but with respect to what still continues sealed to us, we ought greatly to rejoice that God's word and mysteries are so profound and unsearchable.

Christ is not only wonderful in his person, but he is also wonderful *in his divine perfection, beauty, and loveliness* ; yea, all that is in him, is wonderful and incomprehensible. All that can be said in his praise, is mean, yea nothing compared with the thing itself. We must here say also, come, taste,

and see, how perfect, how lovely, how friendly Jesus is! The Queen of the kingdom of Sheba came to hear Solomon's wisdom, and to see his riches; and on hearing and seeing them, she was struck with astonishment, and as it were beside herself, and said, the half has not been told me of the pomp, and order, and wisdom. Ah, my dear friends! if we had ever so many Christmas days, nay, if we heard, read, and spoke ever so much in praise of our Immanuel, from one year's end to another: yet all this would not be the thousandth part of it. When, by happy experience, we find him, in our hearts: we are then constrained to confess and say, He is wonderful; I could never have thought, that God was such a God, and that such delights, such infinite perfections are to be found in Jesus.

When the world seeks out its objects, and portrays them to the best advantage, we may boldly strike off half the value. They are not worth so much; the world only makes its objects appear great and glorious; it promises mountains of gold; but they are mere promises. He that has experienced, he that has seen, contemplated, tasted and enjoyed, what the world possesses, goes away mortified, and with downcast looks, and must think in his heart, Is there nothing more to be found in the world than this? I could never have supposed it! But the very reverse is the case with our dearest Saviour; he is infinitely wonderful, in his perfections and excellencies. My friends, you cannot believe it; come and taste therefore; the table is now spread;

you may all find refreshment in his most gracious names, which are full of healing virtue for poor sinners.

Jesus is wonderful in his *form*. Much of what was great, glorious, and excellent concerning the Saviour, had been prophesied of him, for many thousand years. At length he came; but how did he come? As a poor little infant, and in utter poverty. Now this was the form, of which so much had been said; but it did not please the people. He had no form nor comeliness, which could please the world, the lofty, the proud, the self-conceited, and the prudent people. The Jews expected quite another kind of Messiah; he was to be a man of splendour and authority, who could deliver them from the Roman yoke, and make them a glorious and fortunate people in the world. Such a form was what they expected; and yet the Messiah came as a poor child!

Ah, my dearest friends! is it not the case even to this day? The celestial glory appeared only to the shepherds in the field. The Pharisees probably thought, if it had but appeared to great, and reputable, and learned people: the thing might be the sooner credited: but these people have probably only imagined that they have seen a heavenly vision; it has been, very likely, nothing but an illusion. But my dearest friends, let us not be offended at the mean appearance of Christ and his members. Not many wise, (although some,) not many mighty, (although some), not many noble, (although some

noble), has God chosen ; but things that are foolish in the sight of the world, and things that are weak, and ignoble, and despised. (1 Cor. i. 26—29.) And such is the case, even in our day : reason still always thinks, if there were but many reputable people amongst the pious ! and even if there were only a few such amongst them ; but they are so thinly scattered ; they consist mostly of mean and vulgar people, who suffer themselves to be deceived, and only run with the rest ; whilst the prudent remain behind. My friends ! be children in simplicity ; Christ had also this appearance. The children of God do not seek and make any splendid appearance ; but they seek undisguised hearts, simplicity, lowliness, contempt of the world, and all that which the world esteems. This is the form of the members of Christ.

Christ is wonderful in his ways. Jesus Christ is unspeakably wonderful in his ways and dealings with his people. At one time he grants sweetness to the soul ; at another, he places her again in bitterness. One that has long walked in the grace of God, is again obliged to wander in barrenness and darkness ; whilst for a prodigal son, who is scarcely returned from the husks, a feast is prepared, and a nuptial robe is given ; he is refreshed, he is adorned, and can live happily and joyfully. God is wonderful in his ways, that he may put to shame all our ways. He is wonderful in not suffering us to see and say, beforehand, how it will fare with us, in our religious course. At one time, he exalts his

people to the highest seat, and then again places them on the lowest, in order to do away with all presumption. At one time, he arrays us beautifully and gloriously, so that we think, it will now go well with us ; and the next day we find ourselves again poor, and wretched. Thus wonderful is Jesus in his dealings with us. This ought to incite us to childlike simplicity, so that we may follow him in a docile and childlike manner, in all that he ordains concerning us. He will and shall overrule all things wonderfully, but at the same time gloriously.

But we must be brief. It is said, his name shall be called wonderful, *Counsellor*. Counsel is good for men who have gone astray, as we all have by nature. Ah ! our dearest Saviour, after his incarnation and birth, is become the true counsellor for poor sinners.

All the inward convictions, invitations, corrections, and admonitions, which a forlorn child of Adam feels on account of his sins, are nothing but the most estimable counsel of our dearest Immanuel, who would gladly redeem our souls from perdition. O my friends ! esteem the first convictions of grace very highly ; it is Jesus, our dear Counsellor, who seeks to give you the best advice. Ah, the Devil is also (though improperly) a counsellor of the heart ; he seeks to explain away the counsel of Jesus from the mind ; ‘ O, this is only melancholy, says he, this is heaviness ; divert thyself here and there a little, that these gloomy thoughts may be banished from thy mind.’ O my

friends ! continue near your hearts ; for the title, " Counsellor," ought to induce us to manifest attention and obedience to the dear Saviour. We ought also to continue attentive and obedient ; for our dear Saviour, Jesus Christ, not only counsels us, when we are to be brought back from going astray, as it is written in the book of Job, chap. xxxiii. 29. " Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit : " but our dearest Saviour is also a Counsellor for the humbled, poor, but still unadvised and perplexed sinner.

Counsel is only suitable for those that are destitute of it. As long as we live in the world, secure in sin, we need no counsel. The man then walks according to the imaginations of his own heart. But when sin is felt, when danger is seen, good advice is appreciated ; we then exclaim as it is written in the second chapter of Acts, " Men and brethren, what must we do to be saved ? " Good counsel is then valuable. Now Jesus is called a Counsellor ; he will give the best advice to poor and perplexed sinners. Do not let thy own flesh and blood counsel thee ; do not let thy reason counsel thee so as to induce thee to think, thou canst again satisfy and pacify thy conscience with some outward, easily performed matter ; nothing is sufficient but the counsel of Jesus Christ. What advice then does he give to such a one ? ' Turn thee, as a poor sinner, unto me, who alone can blot out thy sins.' See this is the advice, ' Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden ; come hither with your

sins, continue lying at my feet, cry, sob, beg, persevere, until you obtain grace for the forgiveness of your sins.

Ah, my dearest friends ! let us therefore reply to this most precious counsel of Jesus Christ our Immanuel, by a strict attention and obedience ; and he will then, as our adviser, introduce us into the thing itself. When the first advice was given to the Apostle Paul, with reference to his conversion, and the preaching of the gospel : he acted so as we all ought to do, as he himself describes it in Gal. i. 15, 16, where he says, “ When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen : immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.” Reason, and other worldly-minded characters are not the true counsellors ; we must immediately follow that, which we inwardly feel of divine grace in our hearts and consciences. O my dear friends, attend to it, follow it, and close your eyes against the world, and flesh and blood, and all the arguments of reason. If Jesus gives us counsel, the result cannot be otherwise than good.

Counsel is not only good for such as are unadvised and perplexed : but there is also a great difference to be observed between counselling and law-giving. Thus our dearest Saviour is distinguished from Moses, the lawgiver. A lawgiver goes to work with severity ; but counselling is the work of a dear friend, who seeks to advise us for our good. Thus

it is that Jesus evidences himself to the believing heart. O we should never do right, but fall into a thousand perplexities, if we had not such a counselor. If we know not how to do any particular thing, whether inwardly or outwardly, if we only offer up a heartfelt prayer to our dear Saviour, only turn to the Lord and regard the thing no longer in a natural manner: we shall obtain courage, light, and power. We shall then do much better than if we reflected upon the thing ever so long, except it be something which lies entirely within the scope of our rational faculties.

Our dearest Saviour evidences himself as a Counsellor and not as a lawgiver, particularly in this, that he endeavours to lead us into his mind and image, whilst seeking to advise and call us away from all the misery, sin, and sorrow of our hearts. Ah, my dearest friends! if we were only truly attentive and obedient, how should we experience what a faithful friend and faithful adviser Jesus is! If, for instance, some believing heart were about to direct itself to some particular object, or still cleave to some false idol; Jesus would announce himself inwardly in the heart, with his Spirit of love, and say, "See, dear soul, it is not good that thou still hangeest thine heart upon this or that object, or that thou still takest pleasure in this or that particular thing; therefore turn away from it." O precious advice! If we only remained assiduously near our hearts, how kindly and amicably, would our dear Saviour—not as an austere man, not as a lawgiver, but as a friend—call

us away from the world and all its pleasures, from sin and all its folly, and from all vanity and all false life in ourselves : he would call us to himself in our hearts, and speak kindly to us. If some wrathful power were about to spring up in our hearts ; our dearest Saviour is present, as a counsellor, with his believing people, saying, O dear soul, plunge thyself in the gentlest manner into my simple, meek, and loving Spirit, and then choke the little angry principle. If some obstinate and harsh self-will and irritated feeling would burst forth in the heart, the loving spirit of Jesus would faithfully advise us, saying, 'Now, my child ! humble thyself, abase thyself more meekly.' When any one has any thing of a painful nature to bear, Jesus will then also shew himself as a counsellor : 'Look at me, he will say, in my sufferings ; behold how much I have suffered for thee ; therefore take up thy cross once more courageously ;' such a counsellor will Jesus Christ, our incarnate Saviour, prove himself to be to our hearts. But if we are not very attentive to our hearts, if we do not continue near our minds, and persevere in the gracious guidance of our dearest Saviour, we may then again go astray upon false bye-paths, and form to ourselves a religion, which is after all only half a religion.

Ah, my dearest friends ! many, alas ! who experience, that the dear Saviour, by his estimable counsel, is desirous of introducing them into such a strict denial of themselves and the whole world, when he thus calls us away from all the false life of nature

and the creature, often begin to reason and to speculate, so as to think, and say, Such a one does it also, religion does not consist in these things, it is not the thing itself, &c. Now this is mere sophistry; and yet the individual is well aware, what the dear Saviour would gladly have him do. But we ought to pay no regard to any thing whatever, that reason may say; let us only simply follow the valuable and loving counsel of the Saviour, and we shall experience, not only that we lose nothing by it, but that by such a childlike docility, we shall attain to even greater felicity and blessedness in our hearts.

Jesus is not only a counsellor, but he is also called "*the mighty God*," "wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God." To what purpose shall this appellation "*the mighty God*," serve us? That we may be induced filially to trust on Jesus, and seek to remain, in a childlike manner, in him, as our only power and strength. Believers require strength to tear themselves loose from so many fetters, from so many snares, and from so many things, by which and to which they are bound; but alas! there is no power in us to effect it! However the counsels of our dearest Saviour Jesus are not like the counsels of a man. Men give us much advice, and yet communicate no power to accomplish it; but in the counsel of our dearest Saviour Immanuel there lies, at the same time, a real power. When his grace, that bringeth salvation, appears unto us, teaching us that we should deny any particular ungodliness and

worldly lust : (Titus ii. 12.) there is, in the admonition, a real power to *be able* to deny. Hence, when we are inwardly conscious, that our dear Saviour demands any particular thing of us, as for instance that we ought seriously to break through any particular obstruction : we ought not, on such occasions, to think, that we shall be unable to persevere in our religious course ; that we cannot possibly walk in such a manner for a continuance ; if we begin to act thus, to abstain from this thing and that, and to walk so strictly and circumspectly, when we are perhaps placed in some particular situation, in an office, in a vocation, or are peculiarly circumstanced—how shall we surmount all these obstacles ? These, my dear friends ! are nothing but the speculations of reason. Christ calls himself a counsellor ; and for that which he requires of a soul, he also gives the power. Therefore, we ought, like Paul, immediately to act, give our sincere consent to Jesus, and make the commencement, only not in our own strength, but in the name of Jesus, our dearest Emmanuel ; for he gives us the ability for that which he requires of us.

When in the days of his flesh, he called to his disciples, saying, “ Come, and follow me ! ” They immediately followed him. They did not reason long, nor say, Whither wilt thou go ? What wilt thou do with us ? I must attend to my fishing boats. I have this and that to do ;—ah ! there was nothing of all this. The call of Jesus is a powerful word addressed to our hearts ; there lies a virtue hidden

in it. O ye souls, who feel it in your hearts, only venture, in God's name! remember that you can do all things through him that calleth you. If he saw that he could not lead you through every thing, he would not call you. But he is faithful, who hath called us, who also will do it; if we only faithfully resign ourselves to him. All the objections of reason and the flesh are nothing but a deception of Satan. O, how many a one passes year after year, and yet is conscious that God requires of him honestly to venture every thing, to give up all for him, to resign every thing to the hands of Jesus as his property; and yet only reasons and speculates upon it, and only goes round and about the thing. Ah, my friends, it does not rest with us, it rests alone with Jesus and his powerful call. We must supplicate it from him, and from him we shall also attain it; his power shall lead us safely through.

Thus it is also with every other requirement of divine grace. If grace requires of believers that they should do, omit, or suffer any thing, if it places us in some trying situation—all we have to do is to remain within, in a childlike manner, resign ourselves, confide in him obediently, and abide by the power within, but not go out from the power, in order to reason. I say, the expression, "the mighty God," ought to incite us to commit ourselves to Jesus, and also to abide within. When a man goes astray from his own heart, and from the Lord, and then thinks, 'I will do so and so; will seriously undertake the thing; thus and thus it is required of me;

I will therefore do it, I will not do this or that any more, as long as I live; I will now walk so strictly and faithfully before God; am I not able to bear this and that? Yes, I will boldly undertake it. When the individual thinks thus, departs from Christ and from his own heart, and consequently also from the power: it cannot end well; we shall every where fall short, with all our own good resolutions. O these words, the *mighty God*, call us to filial inwardness! Continue in this power, and you will then understand what Paul says, "I can do all things, through Christ who inwardly strengtheneth me," (Phill. iv. 13.) as the words really signify. You see, in the example of Paul, that he was able to do all things, through him, who inwardly strengthened him.

Thus, also, with respect to our sanctification. When we regard the strictest demands of the law, and especially of the gospel; when we consider what is comprised in the severe doctrine, the strict life and walk of our Saviour on earth, and how we ought to be made like and conformed into his image; we then think, 'Ah, we cannot possibly become so holy, so pious, so meek, so simple, and so faithful; no, we never shall be able to do it.' Ah, my friends! as we have already said, we are of ourselves unable, the power of Jesus must perform it. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, whose name is the *mighty God*;" he can do what we cannot. Jesus himself says, "Without me, ye can do nothing," (John xv. 5.) certainly we are much less able than

we think. The words are indeed in the mouths of many ; ‘ We cannot do it of ourselves ; for it is said, “ without me ye can do nothing ; ” but that which precedes them, “ Abide in me ; so shall ye bring forth much fruit,” is overlooked. Jesus is the power. We heard yesterday, that the Son given, is the only foundation and cause of the new birth and the life of grace in our hearts. Christ, with his life of grace, is unspeakably near us, in our interior ; on him must believers ever filially build and confide, however much weakness and inability they may find in themselves ; they may venture on Jesus ; on their Saviour, who is so near them, they may build and confide.

And not only so, but they must also seek by faith to *abide in Jesus* ! “ Abide in’ me ; so shall ye bring forth much fruit.” When by faith, and prayer, and love, we continually cleave to our ever-present Immanuel, as a branch to the vine, and seek to adhere as steadfastly to Jesus, in the most profound consciousness of our inability to all that is good, we shall thoroughly and vitally experience, that Jesus is the power in our hearts, whereby such perfect virtues are born in us, the like of which we should otherwise have never been able to produce ; we shall experience, that Jesus will make of us truly pious and holy people ; nay, that he himself will become that holiness in us, by which he, and not we, will be honoured, magnified, and praised. But as soon as a pious individual thinks, ‘ I have now attained this and that virtue ; I have now surmounted this and that obstacle ! and seeks thus to advance, in himself,

to be pious, and please himself in his piety, he has, from that moment, departed from all power, and will fall into every kind of error. But by strictly abiding in Christ Jesus, by filially building and trusting upon his gracious power, by such humble confidence, a soul may courageously proceed forward in her Christian course, as David expresses himself upon it, in the lxxi. Psalm, when he says, ‘ I will go in the strength of the Lord God, I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only !’ Those, therefore, that thus continually seek to go forward in the strength of the Lord God, will experience, that in this manner they will at length attain to the stature of the perfect man in Christ Jesus.

But this appellation, *the Mighty God*, ought also to inspire us with a filial courage, and to excite us to pray with child-like confidence. The words have reminded us of danger and of enemies; for it is in danger, and in the presence of our foes, that we peculiarly require a mighty God. The men of this world live, for the most part, very securely and unconcernedly; they are, as it would seem, often very courageous, nay, they are frequently mighty in impiety. But whence comes it? They do not see the danger, they do not see the foe; and hence they are such heroes. But let them discover their danger on a sick and dying bed; let the adversary then come and say to them, thou must now enter into eternity; how does their might depart, how is their courage fled! Those are miserable heroes, who do not carry Christ in their hearts! Ah how easily

does that courage sink, which rests not on the blood of Christ !

My believing hearers, we must become men of might ; we must build and confide solely upon Christ and his mighty power. Jesus Christ proved himself mighty when he ventured upon all our distress and danger, when he bade defiance to all our foes, when he overcame, in his humiliated form, the devil, death, sin, and every adversary in his own person, for our benefit. O the mighty hero ! The souls that have given themselves to Jesus Christ, the Immanuel, may therefore walk courageously and confidently on this ground and foundation, before the Lord. We must not despair, either because of the devil, or of his power ; for Christ, even as a child, divested Satan of his power. Thus Paul describes it, " Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise partook of the same, that, through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, even the devil." (Heb. ii. 14.) Christ, by his death, has deprived Satan of his power ; by his death, he has deprived death of his power. Believers, who have given themselves to Christ, and have united themselves with Christ, can likewise be mighty through this heroic courage of Jesus Christ, and exclaim from 1 Cor. xv. 55—57, " Death, where is thy sting ? Grave, where is thy victory ? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The children of God may be also confident and

courageous with regard to the world. They must not be afraid of the world, of scorn and calumny, or of dangers and vexations, of any sort. "In the world ye shall have tribulation," says Christ; it will not fare otherwise with you, ye pious characters; you must not expect good days according to the flesh, he would say; "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good courage, I have overcome the world;" I am the mighty God; cleave only to me, and it can do nothing to you. Thus it is, that the children of God may become mighty; and so with regard to all the rest of our foes. There is not a single sin in us, which Jesus himself has not overcome for us. He was in all points tempted like as we are, that he might have compassion with us, and might redeem us from all the power of sin. Thus may, and thus ought the children of God to proceed forward, filially and confidently, in their Christian course, and not be so desponding, not always be looking at themselves, not always lament and complain in such a manner, nor be always so terrified in the presence of their foes; no! let us only cleave with filial courage to Jesus Christ; he has overcome our enemies for us, he will also overcome them in us.

But I am speaking of a *filial* courage, founded on prayer. A filial courage is not such a courage, as is produced, when a man is strong in his own strength, and thinks what wonderful things he will accomplish in his Christian course. Ah, this is in reality, a wretched courage! God lets such heroes

fall. Peter had once such an heroic courage ; but he did not know himself. He said, " I will go with thee, even unto death ! I will not prove faithless ; if they all forsake thee, yet will I not forsake thee." See, this was a hero of himself, and in himself, who was not dependant upon Christ and his mighty power through filial prayer ; he therefore fell of necessity, and was obliged to learn from experience, what sort of a hero he is who opens his mouth too widely in his own strength.

Nor must we be mighty in consequence of the sweetnesses, delights, and sensations, which God perhaps imparts to us in prosperous seasons. There is nothing great in being a hero, when no enemy appears. Frequently, when the soul is inwardly looked upon, refreshed, and visited by divine grace, and God lets the individual taste his sweetness in his first love : he then thinks with David, " I shall never be moved ; I shall now walk truly as becometh a Christian ; and by acting so and so, I will outstrip all others !" Ah, my dear friend ! this is no child-like courage ; this is a *childish* courage. The sweetness is soon over, and then the Lord lets thee experience what a wretched hero thou still art, and how barren, and wretched, and miserable thou still appearest in his sight. Those children, to whom sweetmeats are given, are not the best and most obedient children. It is because of our weakness, that God is often obliged to let us taste light, sweetness, and emotions ; but if we are willing to become

mighty men, we must found our might solely on Jesus Christ, through child-like prayer, and having recourse to Jesus.

We must possess a child-like courage: and this appears to me so very pleasing. When a child sees a fierce dog, or even a terrible man, how does it defend itself? It runs, as fast as possible, to creep into its mother's lap; such heroes ought we to be. At the sight of every danger and every foe, we ought to turn, in this child-like manner, with heartfelt prayer to Jesus, with an entire confidence in him. We can place confidence in him; we can act towards him just like a child towards its mother. When a child has hid itself in its mother's lap, it then thinks neither of dog nor danger. In our child-like courage, we ought to look at our mighty God, and not at ourselves; for if we look at ourselves, we shall not long remain heroes. Peter had once to come to Christ upon the sea; all went well; as long as he looked to Christ, he was able to walk upon the sea; but no sooner did he look upon the waves of the sea, than Peter began to sink. Thus fares it with us, my dear friends! We must look unto Jesus, our mighty God, amidst all our wretchedness, infirmity, foes, and dangers. The gracious look of the omnipotent, ever-present Saviour, Jesus, can alone make us so mighty, as to cause us to fear neither danger, men, nor any thing else. That wonderful prophet, Elisha, stood once in the presence of three kings, namely, Jehosaphat, king of Judah, Joram, king of Israel, to whom came also the king

of Edom. These three kings had taken the field, where kings are not always of a meek spirit ; and when Elisha was compelled to appear before them, he said to Joram the king of Israel, " As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehosaphat, the king of Judah (for he was a pious king), I would not look toward thee, nor see thee." (2 Kings iii. 14.) See, here was a hero ! Elisha was not afraid, in the presence of three kings, when he had to appear before them, in the name of the Lord. Thus confident and courageous may Christians be also. The Christian, wherever he may be, ought to show himself untrified and undismayed. Believing souls, who do not look at themselves, but filially take refuge with Jesus, and unite themselves with Christ ; may venture upon him, and need not be afraid of any distress, danger, or enemies, who may assail them outwardly or inwardly.

Further, his name is " Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, *the Everlasting Father.*" O sweet expression ! To what ought this to excite us, that our dear Saviour calls himself the Everlasting Father, or the Father of Eternity ? It ought to excite us to a child-like resignation and to filial love to this Father, this Everlasting Father. Christ retains a steadfast and ever-loving parental heart. Children may often commit weaknesses, they may be imprudent, and through imprudence may break and destroy something ; they are not, however, expelled from home, on that account, but are

reproved ; and if they are naughty, they are corrected ; yet children are and continue children ; the father retains a father's heart towards them. And thus is Jesus Christ disposed towards those who have let themselves be born again by his grace. O ! he is to them an Everlasting Father, a father in the fellowship of his heart, his love, and his life, which he will not withdraw from them on account of the weaknesses and infirmities which cleave to them against their will.

He continues an Everlasting Father, in his unwearied care for his children. O how much care does our dear Saviour take in bringing up a single soul, and in forming it after his image ! O how careful is he from morning till night, in aiding and assisting his people, in every way and manner ! O how unwearied is he, in his paternal solicitude and attention, to refresh his children, and to provide for them in every way !

He is also an Everlasting Father, in his paternal patience. O how much does he bear with and overlook in his people ; and yet he remains their Everlasting Father ! For this expression not only means Everlasting Father, but according to the original, it means more properly, " Father of Eternity." Christ, the new-born infant at Bethlehem, is peculiarly the child of eternity. There he lies in the manger of Bethlehem, ; in the world, yet not of the world ; he is and continues a child of Eternity, a Father of Eternity. When Christ is about to be born in the heart, and desires to form himself there, he calls

his people powerfully away from all things, from the world, from all the fashions of this world, from all high things, and from all that this world highly esteems. See! there lies Jesus in the manger, even upon hay or straw, in the greatest necessity and poverty; his whole being says, 'I do not esteem the world with all its riches, honours, rank, lusts, and imaginary pleasures; no, I pay no regard to these things; I am not come into the world for them; I am and continue a child of eternity!

Now, Jesus is born to us as a Father of Eternity, and he is inwardly near in the hearts of his people; this child now powerfully calls us to continue no longer children of the world, but become children of eternity, who live apart from the world with their heart, desires, senses, thoughts, and with their whole will. We must be prepared, by this Father of Eternity, to become children of eternity. The more room Jesus gains in the heart and interior, the more does he elevate the heart, the senses, and all the powers of the soul, so that they are constrained to take leave of the present time, and of all temporal things, in order to have their conversation in heaven, in a blessed eternity.

See, my dearest friends! the child of Bethlehem is no longer to be seen outwardly in the world; the child is in eternity, and yet is unspeakably near the hearts of believers. But irrespective of this, we shall not be long together in the world. We must soon close our eyes to all that, which we still see, like a shadow, before our eyes. Away, therefore,

with the world ! We must become children of eternity, through this Father of eternity. We have our father and our native land, not here in the world, but in eternity ; there must likewise be our heart, our love, our whole soul, and our whole man. Jesus Christ calls himself the father of eternity. Eternity is an outbirth, a work of the dear Saviour, who, as the almighty powerful Word of God, brought forth the whole blissful eternal world ; this belongs to him, he is the father of it, he is the Father of eternity, and I, through grace, am become his child.

Now, my dearest friends, what a foundation, consolation, and hope does it afford me, that I shall also have part in this blissful eternity. If he is my Father, and I his child ; in and through this filial connexion, I am therefore become an heir of that which belongs to him. If he is the father of eternity, then shall the children of God, though possessing nothing from the world, inherit the whole blissful eternity. The joyful angelic world, when they lay down their heads, shall be presented to them, as their portion and their inheritance.

Prince of Peace is the last appellation. Jesus calls himself the prince of peace. To what ought this to excite us ? It ought to excite us to heartfelt joy, to love, praise, and to the magnifying of his eternal free grace. Peace ! no man has peace, who does not possess Jesus, the divine child, in his heart. Christ came to bring peace on earth, by his incar-

nation and birth; by his sufferings and death, he has put away and reconciled the enmity, which had arisen, through sin, between God and man, in his blood. All, therefore, who now resign themselves, in reality, to Jesus Christ, as his property, enjoy the peace of God in the forgiveness and remission of all their sins. Paul says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 1.) O what a precious prize, what a treasure, and what happiness lies in this, that a penitent sinner may return and say to himself, 'God is no longer my foe: he is become my friend; I am reconciled to him through Jesus Christ my Saviour;' this no one knows, but he that experiences it.

But O how terrible it is, for one that is still unconverted and unreconciled to be hastening towards eternity! O ye that are spending your days in the world with an evil and disturbed conscience, without the friendship of God, how can you lay yourselves down, quietly and at peace, at night upon your beds? May not this night be your last, in which you must pass over into an endless eternity; and if you have not the peace of God, and are compelled to appear before God, as your enemy, how eternally unhappy will you be!

But Jesus is a prince of peace, and thus he proves himself to his people, by communicating more and more, to their hearts and minds, a peace, which passeth all understanding, as Paul says; (Phil. iv. 7.)

so that, in their hearts, they are most profoundly pleased and satisfied with the favour of their God and Saviour. The children of God must, indeed, as well as other men, live in a restless world, in the midst of much sorrow, affliction, adversity, and disturbance; the children of God may also have to experience war, fire, and all kinds of misfortunes; but the dear Saviour says, "abide in me, so shall ye bring forth fruit." Therefore, however, disturbed and adverse things may be in the world: however much this or that particular thing may seek to annoy: he that hath Jesus, has so secure a habitation, that his inmost soul continues unmoved, in the midst of every storm, from within and without. The vessel lies safely at anchor, and although it may be somewhat wasted from without: yet the favor of God inwardly refreshes us, in every disturbance, and sweetens all the toils of this life, in such a manner, that the soul may have confidence.

But lastly; Jesus evidences himself as the prince of peace, in the last and most painful hour, in death. Then, when all is confusion; when the greatest hero is afraid, trembles, quakes, and desponds; Jesus is and continues to be, in his children, a prince of peace; and this he will prove himself to be, as far as they seek, in an artless and childlike manner, to abide in him. O he will not then withdraw his favour from their hearts, but will tranquillize their consciences through the forgiveness of sins, and refresh their hearts by his divine presence, and he

will conduct them into his glory, and into that eternal peace, which he has purchased by his blood.

A prince is also a leader, that leads through every thing. Jesus the prince of peace, is also such a leader; he leads his people through the final assault of death, quite safely and quietly, so that they land in the haven of eternal blessedness. And even though believers may, according to the wise hand of God upon them, be shaken and disturbed upon their dying beds: yet their inmost soul, their faith, continues cleaving to Jesus, as to a firm anchor, and never forsakes him. And thus it is still true, with respect to believers, that Jesus is and continues to be their prince of peace, in death and through death.

People often boast of one or other individual, that he died so quietly, gently, and happily; but was it really so? Was he in possession of Jesus, as the God of peace? Was he reconciled to God through him? Was he a child of God? If not, I do not trust the most happy death. In charity, we hope, indeed, on all occasions the best, and so we ought to do; yet this hope saves none that are unsaved. And although they may be termed of blessed, highly blessed, supremely blessed memory: yet it is all nothing. But I call that a happy death, where the man has the prince of peace in his heart. "The righteous are taken away from the evil to come, and they that have walked in uprightness, enter into peace, and attain to the rest of their spirits, when they die," (as the passage ought to be rendered,

Isaiah lvii. 1, 2.) They rest, it is true, according to the outward man, in their chambers ; “ but their souls are in the hands of God, and there shall no torment touch them.” (Book of Wisdom, iii. 1.) O what a peace, O what a sinking into eternal peace ! Their eyes close against all destruction, torment, and distress, and against all the misery of this world, and they sink into the sublime repose of eternity !

Eternal rest, thee shall my eyes behold,
And taste thy blissful sweetness still untold ;
Shall dwell with thee, with all the hosts above,
Praising and serving thee, thou God of love !

Let us now, my dearest friends, return heartfelt thanks to God, for his goodness, who has once more granted us a season of refreshment and consolation for our hearts, and supplicate his blessing and the inward increase.

PRAYER.

O what grace and inestimable mercy, it is that poor sinners are permitted to bow before thee, the high and lofty One ! O what grace, that thou still givest us to hear thy precious gospel, the announcement of that salvation, which thou hast so dearly purchased and wrought out for us. Do not thy lips overflow with loving-kindness, O Immanuel ? Do not thy teachings and graces taste sweeter than

honey and the honeycomb? O we thank thee, that thou hast deigned to grant us, with many others, here and in other places, at this season, to read, hear, and meditate upon so many good things respecting thee! O Lord Jesus, we thank thee for having sown the seed; give us therefore also thy blessing! Let it not be sown in the wind, but in the heart, spring up, and by thy Holy Spirit, be sealed unto abundant fruitfulness.

Dearest Immanuel! thou fairest of the children of men, we have lisped something respecting thee; O forgive its imperfectness, and the weak manner in which it has been set forth! Do thou make up, by thy Spirit, and by the unction of thy Spirit, all that may have been deficient in words. Make our hearts acquainted with thee, O Lord Jesus! thou supreme and heart-rejoicing good! How distant are the hearts of men from thee! how little art thou known in power and truth, and how little art thou enjoyed within, although there is in thee such a fulness of perfection, beauty and blessedness; yet alas, the hearts of men continue lean and empty. O Lord Jesus have mercy upon us, poor mortals! Let not our days pass away any longer so fruitlessly, whilst neglecting the precious time of grace, and trifling away the day of salvation. Let this last day of this Christian festival, which may be impressively our last, inasmuch as we may possibly not survive another—O let it be a blessed Christmas to us, that we may devote ourselves to thee anew, before we go hence; that with fresh courage and ear-

nestness, we may venture ourselves, and all we have and are in pursuing our course, in order that we, who have seen each other here on earth, may also eventually behold each other before thy throne ; and that we who have contemplated thee here in the cradle of thy lowliness, may also behold thee, together, on the throne of thy glory, where thou sittest at the right hand of thy heavenly Father.

O dearest Lord Jesus ! there are many hungry souls here from a distance, who are about to depart. Thou knowest whether we shall see each other again in this world or not. Now Lord, let thine eyes be upon them, and upon us all together. O protect and defend us from all the assaults of the enemies of our souls, whom thou hast overcome for us ! Let not the seed of thy word be snatched away from the heart ; but by thy continued grace, may it spring up and bear fruit unto complete sanctification and union with thee. O Lord Jesus, let not a single individual go empty away, let not one of us go back, not one of us return again to the world ; but grant, that we may all so walk, that thy dearest name may be magnified and glorified by us !

O Jesus ! we are deeply abased at the consideration, that we are called Christians, yea, that the world calls us pious, and regards us as those who belong to thee, in preference to others. But O Jesus ! how often and variously do we dishonour thy name, and become an offence and a stumbling-block to the world, whilst many might have been incited by us, did we but manifest thine image in

us more faithfully and effectually. Grant us, therefore, new earnestness and courage, sweet Immanuel in the manger! Impress thy most beautiful image on our hearts, that we, as truly simple, affectionate children, as truly praying children, as children, who adhere and cleave to thee, in filial faith and confiding on thy strength, may pursue our course until we attain the crown of glory! We ask all from thy free grace and mercy, for the sake of thy precious merits and powerful intercession at the right hand of thy heavenly Father. Amen.

THE OUT-POURING OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Grace be with us, and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who loved us, and gave himself for us! To whom be glory, now and for ever. Amen.

PRAYER.

O thou highly glorified Saviour, Jesus Christ, who now sittest at the right hand of thy heavenly Father, and, at thy ascension, didst give us the very certain assurance, that thou wouldst be with us, and abide with us, even to the end of the world : who wilt also be present in the midst, where two or three are gathered together in thy name—O manifest thy presence also amongst us on this occasion! Let the hearts of all of us believe in, honour, and adore thy present Majesty. O Lord Jesus! may we all be assembled here, with the same unanimity, and wait with the same ardent desire for the power from on high, and the outpouring of thy precious Holy Spirit, which thou hast also promised to us, with which thy dear disciples and the first believers met

together on the day of Pentecost, and waited for the fulfilment of the promise thou didst give them. As thou hast here collected us together, as it respects the body, so do thou also collect and unite our minds, that we may mutually seek, desire, and sigh after thee in our spirits. Divest our hearts of all distraction and multiplicity, and of all that, which does not lead to thee, that we may meditate on thee alone, and like thy dear disciples, may celebrate a blessed Pentecostal day. O Lord Jesus ! what are we without the fervour of thy spirit ?—without the light and life of thy spirit in our hearts ?—In reality, nothing but dead and formal Christians, who neither know thee, nor love thee, nor glorify thee. Come then, thou blessed Comforter ! Descend upon this assembly ! Enter into every heart ! And though we may not all be filled with thee, let at least a few drops of thy grace flow unto us, on this occasion, that by this water of life, our hearts may be mutually refreshed and incited to devote and offer up ourselves to thee entirely, resign ourselves wholly to thy guidance and direction, faithfully to walk the way of self-denial and of continual mortification, and utterly forsake all that is not thee, that we may be made more and more truly spiritual people, who no longer follow the spirit of the world, and the spirit of darkness, but are led by thee, as the spirit of light, and truth, and life, and renewed more and more into thy divine image. O Lord Jesus ! forgive us, if we have ever grieved thy Holy Spirit, resisted his influences, and withdrawn ourselves from them. O

let thy most sacred blood cover and atone for these and all other sins ! Be thou in the midst of us, and manifest thyself graciously and mercifully to our souls, that like thy disciples, we may experience thy mighty acts and wonderful works, and may thus be in a state to publish and recommend them effectually to others. Do this, and hear and answer this our prayer, for the sake of thy precious blood and merits !

Now, O Spirit of power and love
On my heart and soul flow down ;
That I may thy influence prove,
And thy mighty acts make known. Amen !

Let us therefore read something respecting the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the primitive believers on the sacred day of Pentecost, from

ACTS, CHAP. II. VERSES 1—4.


“ And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all, with one accord, in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house, where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

WHEN we look closely into the Holy Scriptures, we find that mention is made in them of three very

peculiar manifestations of the divine majesty and glory, in which God revealed himself in a more than ordinary manner. The first of these manifestations, which was made to the people of Israel, took place on the first Pentecostal day of the Old Testament, on the fiftieth day after the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, when the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai, and revealed himself, in great majesty, to so many thousands of the children of men from the Mount, with the sound of a loud trumpet, with thunders and lightnings, and with earthquakes, in such a manner, that the whole mountain trembled and smoked; as we may read by reference to Exodus chap. xx.

The second majestic and glorious revelation of God took place, likewise, in a general manner, to many thousands of people on the Pentecostal day of the New Testament, precisely fifty days after the resurrection of Christ. There came, as we have just heard, a rushing mighty wind from heaven, and the glory of the Divine Majesty manifested itself upon the disciples, not only upon the twelve Apostles, but upon the whole multitude of believers, and that quite openly, and in the sight of many thousand Jews and other people, who were present from all parts and quarters of the globe; even as we find various nations mentioned in the following 9th, 10th, and 14th verses.

The third great and general majestic revelation of the glory of God, of which the Scripture speaks, will take place at the great judgment day, when the



Son of man will appear in his glory, in the clouds of heaven, and all his holy angels with him, to judge all the kindreds of the earth.

All these three manifestations have the most intimate reference to each other, and the one always points to the other.

On the first Jewish Pentecost, in the Old Testament, the law of *fear* was given them, from Mount Sinai, written, with the finger of God, on tables of stone. In the second manifestation, on the Pentecost of the New Testament, the law of *grace* and *love* was given, written in the hearts of believers by the Holy Spirit, as by the gracious finger of Deity. The last great day of the manifestation of the Divine Majesty will show, when the Lord shall judge according to the law, which each one shall have had, whether and how he has lived and acted according to it. Paul clearly teaches this in the 2nd chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where he thus writes, in the 9th, 10th, and following verses, "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man, that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. But glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law. In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."

Now it might be said, what have we to do with

the first day of Pentecost, when God gave the law from Mount Sinai ; for that law has been abolished ? It is true, that in so far as it has reference to mere ceremonies, this law is abolished, and has no reference to us, as members of the New Testament ; for Christ has torn asunder the handwriting that was against us on the cross. But the essential part of the Sinaitic law, instead of being abolished by Christ and his Spirit, is intended to be established in our hearts, by the faith of Christ. Now, the essential part of this law consists in this, that we should fear the Lord our God, walk in all his ways, and love him with all our hearts, with all our souls, and with all our strength. (Num. x. 12.) This command, as the substance of the law and the prophets, together with all other moral precepts, which are contained in the Ten Commandments, are also given to us. The Lord must render imperative upon us, upon every soul in particular, the law of fear. This commonly takes place at the commencement of conversion, when the Lord quickens and stirs up the law in our consciences and hearts, places before our eyes, on the one hand, its righteous and severe demands, and on the other, gives us clearly to know our departure from it, and entire inability to fulfil it ; at the same time impressively convincing us of our damnable condition, namely, that according to the strict and blameless requirements of the law, we must inevitably be condemned, and that without mercy. Now when such a salutary terror is produced in the individual, respecting the state of his soul, and the sins he had.

previously committed ; when he begins to see that the law is spiritual, but that he is carnal, and, as it were, sold under sin, and the law, with all its claims, presses itself upon him, with its perfect justice, then it is that the Lord proclaims the law from Mount Sinai, the law of *fear*. It then fares with such persons as it did with the children of Israel ; they could not endure the voice of the Lord ; there was nothing in them but terror, trembling, and quaking before the Majesty of God, which caused them to make the greatest promises. “ All things,” said they, “ which the Lord hath spoken to us, we will do.” Such is also the case with those, who are inwardly touched, convinced, and reprovèd by God, through the law. O, the individual then forms the fairest resolutions ! he will now act in a better manner, he will now most assuredly lead a different life, and a better course ; but it is never accomplished. The most sacred resolutions are never carried into effect ; and, in the meantime, the mind remains disturbed, and the conscience is never satisfied. There must therefore be a new Pentecostal day, in order that men may be saved, namely, the Pentecost of the New Testament, in which the Holy Spirit, and with it, the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, in which the law is given in his heart, and written in his mind, and the man is thus entirely born again. Therefore, says Paul, “ What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might

be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. viii. 3, 4. Paul intends to say by this, that the law is of no avail to a man, whose conscience is disturbed, whose heart tells him that he is condemned, that he cannot stand before God, at the day of judgment; and though he make a thousand good resolutions, and vow and promise ever so much, in order to pacify his conscience; yet God is, with all this, not satisfied, nor is the disturbed conscience pacified and appeased by it; but the only consolation is, that *God has sent his Son*. The precious blood of Christ slain on the tree of the cross, is alone able to satisfy the disturbed conscience, and to blot out and atone for all our sins. And it is not only contained in the words now quoted, but the following also necessarily belong thereto:—"That the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." It is therefore a deception, and a shameful error, if we stop short at the first motions to repentance, and suppose that all is now well, that God has already forgiven our sins, that the blood and righteousness of Christ recompences for every thing, even though the individual continues to sin afresh, upon such a misplaced confidence in the blood of Christ. By so doing, he treads under foot the precious blood of Christ, accounts it as unclean, and makes Christ the minister of sin. O, it is by no means sufficient, that Christ has paid the debt of our sins with his blood! he must also take sin itself away from us, entirely destroy it, as the work of the devil, in our hearts,

and redeem us from all unrighteousness and iniquity ; he must give us to experience a Pentecostal day, and send his Holy Spirit into us—write, by his means, as the finger of God, his laws in our hearts—impart to us a true love to them, and make such people of us, as walk in his commandments from their own voluntary and loving impulse. In a word, if we are to be made partakers of his merits, he must make us partakers of his divine nature, and also fulfil in us, by his Spirit, the righteousness of the law, even as he fulfilled it out of us.

Now, if we are not thus sanctified by his Holy Spirit, renewed into his most sacred image, and made partakers of his divine nature, nor have celebrated the Pentecost of the New Testament, in spirit and in truth, how shall we be able to stand before him in that great day of the third general manifestation ? when he will judge us according to the law he has given us, and when it will certainly not be indifferent to him, whether he has white or black souls before him ; but he will surely separate the sheep from the goats, and place the former at his right hand, and the latter at his left. Then it will truly be said, “ Whose image and superscription is this ? ” Hence we may also clearly infer, how indispensably necessary it is, for every one of us to keep a pentecostal day. Not that we merely outwardly commemorate the remembrance of the great miracle, which occurred with the apostles and the other believers ; but we must likewise wait for and experience such a day, in which the Holy Spirit shall descend upon

us, as he formerly did upon the Apostles, and the other disciples, when he enlightens us with his light, leads us into all truth, redeems us from all unrighteousness, writes the law of love in our hearts, and makes of us a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy people. For these promises are not merely made to a few: but to all and every true christian believer. "The promise, says Peter, in his pentecostal sermon, is unto you, and to your children, and to all them that are afar off, whom the Lord our God shall call." Acts ii. 39. It has reference, not only to one and another, but the Apostle says expressly, that the promise was made to them and to their children, and to all those that should believe on him, through the power of this word.

This may serve, in the first place, as a no small consolation, in so far as we possess, in our hearts, the smallest spark of divine love, and especially to troubled souls, since we hear, that our piety and godliness is not always to continue so wretched and imperfect: but that power from on high will be imparted to us, for this purpose, which shall accomplish that in us, which human powers are incapable of effecting; and secondly, that we ought most powerfully to incite ourselves by this, worthily to prepare ourselves for the celebration of the day of pentecost and the reception of the Holy Spirit, in order that he may pour himself out upon us, in as full a measure, as he formerly did upon the first believers, and that it may be said of us as it was formerly of them, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Let

us therefore, with the divine assistance, and following the narrative of the day of pentecost we have just read, mutually consider and reflect upon the highly necessary preparatives for celebrating the day of pentecost, and receiving the Holy Ghost.

I. We must give place to the first motions of the Holy Spirit, inciting us to repentance, and seek to follow them cordially.

II. We must not stop short at these first motions, but continually advance further.

III. We must cultivate a continual and intimate intercourse with other children of God, and live closely united with them.

IV. Our hearts must be outwardly and inwardly collected for prayer.

V. We must faithfully endure, and unweariedly wait for the real impartation of the Holy Spirit.

I. In order that we may worthily prepare ourselves for the reception of the Holy Pentecostal Spirit: we must give place to the first motions of the Holy Spirit inciting us to repentance and the amendment of our lives, and make it our cordial endeavour, with the divine assistance, to obey, immediately and without any delay, the salutary suggestions of the Spirit, when he announces himself to us, and carry them into effect in the best manner possible. Of this we have an instance in those who first believed on the Lord. For "when the day of pentecost was fully come: they were all with one accord, in one place." And in the 14th verse of

the former chapter, it stands still more expressly : “ They all continued together, with one accord, in prayer and supplication.” They were therefore immediately obedient to the voice of their dear Saviour ; they met together unanimously, and sought, by prayer and supplication, to prepare themselves for the reception of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, when it pleases God to call us to himself, by the operation of his Spirit : we must immediately obey, and not confer long upon it with flesh and blood, but be ready, not only to listen to the divine will, but also to fulfil it.

The first operation of the Holy Spirit is to produce fear and reproof. This Christ himself teaches us, when he thus speaks, in the 16th chapter of John, “ But when the Spirit, the Comforter, is come, he will reprove the world” (verse 8.) This is his first work in the hearts of those, who are to be prepared for the reception of the holy pentecostal Spirit. Hence, my dearest friends ! it is of no avail, to wish to receive the Holy Spirit with an unchanged heart. The gift of the Holy Spirit to repent must precede, before a man can be capable of receiving the precious Holy Spirit. In the first chapter of the Book of Wisdom, it is expressly said, that the Holy Spirit, who teaches right things, departs from the ungodly : that wisdom is so just, that it cannot let the blasphemer go unpunished. Therefore, we hope in vain to have the Holy Spirit, eventually on our death-bed, as a Comforter, unless we have previously received and accepted him as a

reprover, a corrector, and as a preacher of repentance, into our hearts. The dear disciples of our Lord, and the believers certainly did not come, as it were, with unwashed hands, to the day of pentecost. They had already frequently felt the motions and operations of the Holy Spirit in their hearts; they had been, from the very commencement, obedient to the voice of the dear Saviour, and the call of his Spirit, when at the outset of their conversion, he said to them, "Follow me," they forsook all, and followed him. In this manner, these dear believers had already learnt their lesson; before the day of pentecost arrived. Thus it must be also with us. We must, certainly, first submit ourselves to the reproving office of the Holy Spirit; we must let the truth be told us to our face, and our misery and deep depravity be thoroughly laid open by him to our view, if we are desirous of partaking of his sweet influences, his consolations, and his indwelling life in our hearts. For light and darkness cannot have fellowship with each other. On which account it is therefore highly necessary, that the Holy Spirit, as a Spirit of judgment and burning, as he is called in Isaiah, and as a sharp and pungent hyssop, should previously lay hold of and purify the heart, and render it capable and fit for his blissful indwelling. The soul ought, therefore, for this reason, to pay diligent attention to the first motions of the Holy Spirit, revere his salutary admonitions, and make it her serious endeavour, strictly to obey them. Now whether the Holy Spirit reproves us for small things or great :

we must immediately be ready to receive his corrections with cordiality, and filially submit to them. If it be his will that we deny ourselves, and divest ourselves of our carnal-mindedness, together with all selfishness, lust, and love of the world: we must not lightly pass over it, and think that all this, in due time, will come of itself: we will wait for it until we have experienced the pentecostal day; we will then be more fit for such virtuous exercises. No, my dearest friends! this is not what is meant, nor is it effected in such a manner. We must strive, particularly at the commencement, to co-operate with the divine assistance. 'Work, while it is called to-day, says the Saviour, for the night cometh, when no man can work.' When the individual, either from inattention and slothfulness, gives no heed to the first gracious motions of the Holy Spirit, or else suffers them to pass over, under a variety of specious pretences, without co-operating with them in the smallest degree—this is the only reason why the individual often remains, his life long, an unmortified and self-willed creature, and is entirely unfit for the reception of the Holy Spirit.

But there are also many souls, who suffer themselves to be restrained from this co-operation, by the specious pretence, as if by so doing, they were seeking to establish their own righteousness, and as it were, infringe upon the Lord's rights; but although it be true, that the man, by his own working, easily goes astray, and his first operations are coupled with much infirmity; yet still we must not lay our

hands in our lap, but faithfully, and as far as we are able, co-operate with the grace, which prevents us, and seek to carry into effect the divine requirements. He that will not commence doing good, until he is perfectly fit and competent for it, will never attain to it. We must, first of all, learn our letters, before we can read. In the same manner, we must first of all act as children, in the school of the Holy Ghost, before we can attain to the age of maturity, and show ourselves in the capacity of fathers. Let us, therefore, in filial confidence upon the divine assistance, simply do, as weak children what we are able ; at the same time earnestly entreating God, that he would perform, in and through us, what we are unable to do ; if we cannot repeat our lesson perfectly, let us at least stammer it out : and as often as like weak children, we fall and stumble, let us again strengthen our feeble knees, and commence our course anew : and the Lord will most assuredly offer us his aiding hand, and bring us to the object we have in view.

Now if we thus truly co-operate with him, and are, at the same time, conscious of our utter inability in every point of view, so that even though we do our best, we are still unable to make any considerable progress : yet even this is a praiseworthy favour, inasmuch as our great infirmity is thus openly manifested to us, and by the lively feeling of our insufficiency, we are so much the more impressively incited heartily and anxiously to sigh, ‘ Lord, help my weakness, my infirmity, and my

total inability to that which is good!' O let us, therefore, by divine grace, faithfully, and in child-like simplicity, work together with God, and not doubt that he will assist us, as far as he finds us sincere, and place us in a situation to be acceptable to him in all things.

II. The second highly necessary preparative for receiving the Holy Spirit is, that we do not stop short at the first motions of the Holy Spirit, inciting us to repentance, and rest satisfied with them; but continually advance further.

As necessary as it is to incline our ear to the first motions and operations of the Holy Spirit with reference to repentance and the amendment of our lives; so it is also equally necessary, that without resting there and being satisfied with them, we should continually go forward, and seek gradually to ascend to perfection. Here many otherwise well-meaning souls fall into the error of regarding the commencement of their conversion, as the whole of conversion, and because they have learnt to repeat their letters, imagine they are already able to read, although they are still very weak children, who scarcely understand the first elements of the divine plan of salvation. This is a deception as disgraceful as it is pernicious. The Saviour's disciples, who were mutually assembled together on the day of pentecost, and waited for the promised power from on high, had already received many gracious testimonies, and, in their strength, had faithfully co-

operated with them ; they had so long heard the best of preachers, and had associated so intimately with him ; that one might suppose they must necessarily be perfectly fitted to teach and convert others in return ; yet notwithstanding this, their Lord and Master expressly forbid it, and on the contrary, enjoined upon them, more than once, not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, through the fulfilment of which, that would be imparted to them, in which they were still deficient.

This has likewise reference to all, who are called in the present day. We may, indeed, have made the commencement of repentance and conversion, and most carefully avoid the gross outbreakings of sin ; we may have already sought to manifest some fidelity in denying ourselves on some particular occasions ; nay, we may have even tasted and experienced something of the graciousness and loving kindness of our God ; yet we must not, on that account, think, that we have already attained our aim, and have already apprehended that, to which the Lord has called us ; but let us rather follow after it, that we may attain to it ! Let us not regard ourselves as Christians on account of some good work we may have performed, or some good feelings we may have experienced, or for the sake of some penitential conflict we may have endured ! Something far more is most assuredly requisite. For unless a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Great things are certainly promised us by God, namely, that by the imparta-

tion of his Spirit, we should become partakers of the divine nature; but then, on the other hand, he also requires something great from us. It is his will, that as far as this precious promise shall be fulfilled in us, we must flee from such things, as are probably the dearest to us, namely the transitory pleasures of the world. It is his will, that we be planted together with Christ in the likeness of his death; that we tread under foot, the world and all that is in the world; that we esteem all things as loss, and devote our love to him alone; in order that he may have entire possession of our hearts, and fill them, the more copiously, with the treasures of his grace, and bless them the more abundantly. This implies something more than the performance of some particular good work, the experience of some emotions, or the striving against some particular sin. Many souls, after enduring something in the first penitential conflict, and afterwards experiencing some gracious moments, or even receiving the assurance of the forgiveness of their sins, imagine they have really broken through every thing, and that the work of their conversion is ended, and therefore betake themselves to rest. This is a great temptation, by which Satan seeks to lull the soul to sleep, and to restrain her from prosecuting the work of her conversion.

Now if such characters would remain near their hearts, and pay strict attention to what passes within them, they would never err from the right path in this manner. The very same Spirit, that bestowed the first grace upon them; that made them ac-

quainted with their depraved state, and thus re-proved sin in them ; this same Spirit, I say, would prosecute his reproofing office, and give them clearly to know, how backward they still are in the work of conversion, and that a still greater progress is requisite. But as such like characters are seldom sufficiently upon their guard, they suffer themselves to be too much involved in earthly and sensible things ; consequently they go astray from their hearts, and are ignorant of themselves. They imagine they are something, whilst they are nothing. They are really still poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, and yet suppose they are rich and have need of nothing. And the grace of the Holy Spirit which they receive at first, may be really so weak, that all that which had once been verdant, may fade away again.

Now, when such souls still frequently feel a disturbance of conscience, which secretly tells them that all is not yet right with them, that they have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin, and that they must therefore begin their penitential conflict anew ; they rely, through the deception of the adversary, upon that which they suppose they have once really experienced, and say to themselves, ‘ thou wast on such an occasion grieved and troubled about thy sins, didst feel them so heavily, didst lament them so heartily ; and at such and such a time, thou didst enjoy the refreshments of grace, and experience the power of faith, and didst receive the assurance of the forgiveness of sins.’

In this manner they seek again to pacify and lull their disturbed and accusing consciences. But, my dear friends ! you are deceiving yourselves ; you are making yourselves only a false and fruitless consolation. All these are unavailing fig-leaves, with which the naked individual seeks to cover his shame ; for supposing that we had really experienced and received grace ; that which I fed upon a year ago, cannot satisfy me to-day. We must daily be conscious of the power from on high, and by its means, never stand still on the path of repentance and conversion, but constantly proceed further ; daily become more experienced in the work of righteousness, and more complete in the Lord ; because the former will otherwise avail us nothing. And indeed, were it really the case, that we had previously obtained mercy, and that grace had been imparted to us, even though but the premices of it : yet the same Spirit, which had wrought this in us, would also bring us further, and not allow us to stop short on the outset, and rest satisfied with it ; since it is, assuredly, a chief property of the Holy Spirit to incite us continually, and seek to advance our progress in that which is good.

O, if we have only once tasted of the good word of God, which is Christ, even but in its commencement—if we have experienced, even in the smallest degree, what it is to have Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, and to have become his living temple—how impossible would it be for us to be all at once satiated with him, and to be able to satisfy ourselves

with the smallest crumbs of his grace ! “ He that eateth of me,” says Sirach very wisely, “ shall ever hunger after me, and he that drinketh of me shall ever thirst after me.” (Ch. xxiv. 28, 29.) If we had tasted, even in the smallest degree, of the water of life, we should experience, in the most lively manner, the truth of what Sirach here asserts ; there would, in consequence, most certainly arise in our inner man, an unextinguishable thirst after it—a thirst which would by no means allow us to linger in the world and its transitory lusts, much less stand still there ; but would, on the contrary, incite us, incessantly, to seek this salutary and blissful fountain, which springeth up into everlasting life, in order that we might refresh and comfort ourselves with it, more and more, and, solicitous for salvation, with joy draw water from it.

Seeing, therefore, beloved friends ! that such great grace is promised, it is highly reasonable that we do not let ourselves be satisfied with a little, but give all diligence, fully to attain to the unsearchable riches, which God so freely offers. Which of us would be so foolish, if a great lord were to offer him a treasure of some thousands, as to content himself with the half of it, or even a very small part of it, particularly if he needed the whole treasure ? Would not every one of us, most heartily take upon ourselves the requisite labour and pains for the attainment of the whole treasure ? How much more, therefore, beloved friends ! ought we to exert all our powers for the sake of that treasure, which is set before us by the heavenly vocation of God in Christ Jesus !

In the xlvii. chapter of the Prophet Ezekiel, where the Holy Spirit is represented to us under the figure of a chrystal stream, we read how the angel had, in his hand, a measuring rod, and measured the waters ; these waters were the Holy Spirit and his issuing forth towards poor, hungry, and thirsty souls. “ He led me,” it is said, verse 3—5, “through the waters, and the waters were to the ancles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters ; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters, the waters were to the loins. Afterwards he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass over ; for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.” What is meant by this ? The meaning is, that we ought not to satisfy ourselves with only moistening our lips with the gracious waters of the Holy Spirit, or with only wetting our feet in them, but we must let ourselves be continually led further, and penetrate, as deeply as possible, into the unfathomable ocean of divine grace ; for there is an unfathomable depth and unutterably bottomless abyss to be found in our God ; an unfathomably deep stream of the Holy Ghost, to fill, beatify, and sanctify our whole heart.

The dear disciples of our Lord were not only endued with the first outpourings of the Holy Ghost, but had also received, from time to time, a considerable addition to them ; and yet the Saviour said, more than once, to them, after his resurrection, “ Receive the Holy Ghost,” although they were

already converted people. But he well knew, that they were deficient in the proper measure of it; he knew, that they were not yet filled with the Holy Spirit, and that they therefore required a day of Pentecost. Therefore, my dear friends! since God has promised us such a fulness; since he has purchased for us such plenitude of grace, through our Lord Jesus Christ; and since he is willing to fill our whole hearts, and to perfect that which concerns us; why should we suffer ourselves to be satisfied with a little?—nay, with such a little, that we are scarcely able to affirm, that there is a Holy Spirit. O let us, therefore, not rest, but continue to hunger after it, until we have received its fulness! Do not think, because we receive the promise, that it cannot fail of being fulfilled in due time. For because the promise is given us, we ought, on that very account, to pray the more earnestly, and wish and desire the more fervently, that it may be fulfilled in us.

When I reflect, that God is so rich in grace and mercy—that the latter have been so dearly purchased for us by the blood of Christ—that such a super-abundance of grace and measure of sanctification may be attained, even in this life, by the impartation of the Holy Spirit—ah! I am truly grieved, and my heart breaks, when I call to mind the many precious souls, who after having been called, in the beginning, frequently manifest such great earnestness, and afterwards, suddenly become so satiated, and so lukewarm, as though they had already at-

tained to fulness and perfection. When I reflect how many have such a noble attraction and vocation, so that they possess the greatest capability of becoming truly good and spiritual, but who, nevertheless, as soon as they have attained, though but a small particle of grace, rest satisfied with it, and stop short, as it were, half way—it is enough to pierce me to the heart. How would it pain us, dearest souls! in the eternal world, to see that we had had the water of grace at our very lips, and might have enjoyed it, in its most abundant fulness, and yet notwithstanding, shamefully neglected to do so?

It is therefore a false and highly sinful humility for a person to say, he would gladly be the meanest in the kingdom of heaven, that he would be heartily satisfied with the crumbs, which fall from the gracious table of our Lord; that every thing is unmerited grace, and every one must be satisfied with what is distributed to him. For he that does not thirst after the best things, that are placed upon the gracious table of our God, is not worthy even of the crumbs. He that can attain the highest state in the kingdom of heaven, and does not desire it, is also unworthy of the lowest. We do not, by merit, receive the least measure of divine influence, much less the fulness; but because it is promised and purchased for us by grace: we ought therefore to hunger after it, and strive for it with all earnestness.

III. The third supremely necessary preparative, for receiving the Holy Ghost, consists in our cultivating a pure, simple, and cordial intercourse with other children of God, and our being closely united to them, after the example of the apostles and disciples of our Lord. "They were, with one accord, in one place." It is afterwards said, "They were of one heart and one soul." The Holy Spirit is a God of love and peace. Therefore in order to become capable and susceptible of him, we must cleave unto those, who are already either led and animated by this Spirit, or at least hunger and thirst after him, and possess the good will of submitting themselves to his government. If we associate much with the children of the world, we shall most assuredly be infected and captivated by the spirit of the world. But if we turn ourselves from the dead to the living, from the children of darkness, to the children of light, and cleave to them, the ardent love-fire of the Holy Spirit, which is in them, would also seize upon and inflame us, if it only met with the least spark of a similar fire in us.

This pure and simple intercourse with the ransomed children of God, is therefore likewise a very salutary, approved, common, yea, necessary preparative for the reception of the Holy Spirit. The Lord's disciples might easily have thought, we will remain at home, and enter into our closets, where each one may pray for himself, and wait for the promised power from on high; the Holy Spirit will know how to find out each of us; he is an omnipre-

sent and omniscient Spirit. 'They did not, however, think so, but assembled mutually, and remained together, with one accord. They remembered the promise, which their Lord and Master had left them, that wherever two or three met together in his name, he would be in the midst of them ;' therefore they remained continually together, unanimously, with prayer and supplication. The Lord knows better than we, that the Holy Spirit is present in every place and omniscient, and therefore may be called upon in one place, as well as in another ; and yet he says, that he will be peculiarly present, in a more intimate manner, where two or three are gathered together in his name. The one, therefore, does not render void the other. A man may pray, in an acceptable manner, by himself, and can do it also when associated with others. But the mutual prayer of many souls gathered together in one spirit, has an especial value, and also an especial promise of life and blessing. It does not, indeed, depend upon the outward meeting together, much less upon much speaking ; but in persons assembling together in the presence of God, with one accord, in calm and sincere devotion, with the united desire of receiving a drop of the gracious water of the Holy Ghost, and full of childlike confidence, engaging in prayer and supplication.

But if we have not always the opportunity of cherishing a blissful intercourse with other children of God, and of outwardly uniting with them : we ought the more ardently to seize and accept these

opportunities, when, through divine providence, they are presented to us, and by no means, from lightly esteeming them, let them pass over and neglect them. But if such opportunities do not all occur, we must notwithstanding, stand in a childlike and cordial unanimity with all the children of God, wherever they may be, and continually unite our devotion, our desires, and our prayers with theirs.

Hence, if we will not unite with the children of God, either outwardly or inwardly, either in a bodily or spiritual manner; if, instead of love, we cherish hatred, envy, and bitterness, in our hearts; and instead of unanimity and peace, animosity and discord—shall we then be capable of receiving the Holy Ghost? shall we not rather entirely bar up his entrance to us? O let us therefore study to be unanimous! Let us incessantly and unweariedly strive after it! And if we cannot outwardly unite with them, let us at least do it in spirit. I am certain, that according to the prophecy of the Prophet Zephaniah, chap. iii. 10, the Lord will bring souls together, more and more, from all places and corners of the earth, from all the different religious sects, and lead and guide them all to the one thing needful, namely, the baptism of the Spirit, and the heavenly unction, to the conversion and renewal into the image of God, which entirely depends upon it, to the great mystery, which has been hid from the beginning of the world, and from all ages; but is now revealed to the saints of God, which is, *Christ in us*. And this will be the preparation for the

great day of Pentecost, which is to be expected in the latter days. Therefore, examine yourselves, my dear friends, in the presence of God, whether your love to the brethren is not perhaps grown cool; whether you do not, on this account, make too much room in your hearts for the accuser of the brethren? Whether you have not looked with a scornful eye upon the meanest? Certainly, by so doing, you would have much grieved the Holy Spirit, who works in a variety of ways, in the children of God.

IV.—The fourth necessary preparative for the obtainment of the Holy Ghost is the outward and inward collectedness of the mind for prayer. “They—the Lord’s disciples—were continually together, with one accord, in prayer and supplications.” The important and golden words of our Saviour, which we read in Matthew vii. and Luke xi. ought reasonably to incite us to earnest prayer and supplication, in a special manner, for the impartation of the promised power from on high. In the 13th verse of the last mentioned Gospel, our dear Saviour says, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to him that asks him!”

Now observe here, that not one individual is excluded. All that shall ask their heavenly Father, for his Holy Spirit, in true heartfelt devotion, shall also obtain him. Ought we not, therefore, the more ardently to beseech our heavenly Father for the impartation of him, the more indispensably we require

him? We must not here sophisticate and say, "God already knows that I need the Holy Spirit; why is it necessary to make so many words, to remind him of it?" These are subtle suggestions of the enemy, who seeks to restrain us from prayer. God certainly knows our wants; but he also requires that we should know them, and, at the same time, acknowledge, that he alone is able to give and bestow what we need upon us; and therefore will be enquired of for that purpose.

Further, we must likewise not think, that as God has promised his Holy Spirit, he will send him at the proper time; that grace must do all things; and that when the Spirit shall once come, we shall be pious and virtuous, as a matter of course. This is a shameful deceit of the flesh. The Holy Spirit was promised to the disciples by the mouth of Christ himself: yet still, they did not think in the manner above mentioned. By no means! the promise of Christ caused them to stay together, with one accord, and to continue, so much the more earnestly in prayer and supplication. Hence the promises of God ought not to restrain us from praying; but rather incite us to it. When Christ says, that our heavenly Father will give his Spirit to all that ask him, he unites prayer with the promise, and teaches, that the promise would only be fulfilled to those who should ask for him. Therefore, if God is to bestow any thing, he will be entreated for it, that we may learn, that he is alone the giver of every good and

perfect gift, and that, consequently, the honour and thanks belong to him alone.

But how shall we pray? It does not depend upon words and outward forms; or upon our making fine speeches to the Lord our God. O no! prayer consists in a sincere hunger and thirst, and in an ardent desire, united with filial confidence, for divine grace, and for the gracious fulfilment of his promises; it is a praying and supplicating in the Spirit. I have however said, that an outward and inward collectedness is requisite in order to pray. Outward collectedness consists in divesting ourselves of worldly business, and intercourse with the world, and in retiring to quiet and solitary places, in order that we may be able to elevate the mind the more freely to God, and avoid more entirely all distraction. Thus the disciples and first believers acted. After Christ was separated from them, and had ascended to heaven, they returned to Jerusalem, went up into an upper room, and there remained from Ascension day till the day of Pentecost.

Now some one might think, why is it needful for me to go into an upper room? What has this to do with the matter? The upper room does not constitute the thing, nor solitude neither. But, my dear friends! do we wish to be wiser than the Saviour himself? Does he not expressly say, "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet," &c. Does he not command us, in order to be able to pray the better, to avoid the noise of the world, and seek solitude?

Outward collectedness is, therefore, an useful, yea, needful, and very estimable work ; which, in the degree we can have it, we ought not to despise, nor neglect, under the pretence that it is a legal work, and that we must pray without ceasing. We ought, certainly, to pray without ceasing ; but this does not do away with outward collectedness. We ought to do the one, and not omit the other. We ought to seek to elevate our minds to God, even in the midst of worldly occupations ; this is incontestible ; but then, alas ! it is not so easily performed ; especially, when a person has a family, and must burden and give himself up to a multitude and variety of outward occupations. Ah ! we are then really not always able to pray ! We must therefore regard it as a great favour of God, when he sometimes grants us an hour, in which we can go into an upper room, enter into our closet, or retire to some other quiet and private place, that we may be able to lay our cause before the Lord our God, without distraction of mind.

Many souls trifle away the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, by making themselves as wise, or even wiser, than God himself, under the specious pretext that it is something legal and unnecessary, or that they are too much occupied to be able to collect themselves in this manner, they neglect each and every opportunity, which God, notwithstanding, frequently offers them. Now it is true, that one person has a much better and more convenient opportunity than another, and that with many, it cannot always be done, on account of their excessive

occupations. But, my friends ! only reflect properly on the subject. You sit down, regularly, three times a day, to your meals, to give nourishment to your bodies. But ought we to care more for the corruptible body, than for the immortal soul ? If we can appropriate so much time for the sake of the body, why not also a few moments for the good of the soul ? Further, we often lie seven or eight hours in bed, and give the body its rest ; ought we not also to grant the soul a little repose, in order that it may recover itself from its various distractions, and meditate upon the chief object of its existence in the world ; even supposing that we were obliged to abstract it from the times of eating and sleeping, and the attention which is due to the body ? Ought we not rather entirely to part with all that has reference to the mortal body, than suffer ourselves by caring for it, to be drawn away from the principal business of our lives ? What would it avail us, were we to gain the whole world, and lose our own souls ? We must therefore engage in the business of the world, in such a manner, as to have still sufficient time to ascend, now and then, into the upper room. For, in such sacred serenity and solitude, removed from all the toilsome vanity of this transitory and momentary life, the Holy Spirit, who is a tranquil Spirit, can best and most effectually speak with us, and we are then better fitted to listen to him ; we can then exclaim with the child Samuel, " Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." (1 Sam. iii. 9.)

We must not, however, stop short at this outward

collectedness. The chief point to be observed is, the inward collectedness. That which is outward, cannot be had at all times, but, through the grace and Spirit of God, we may always attain to that which is inward, which is the most requisite. But wherein does this inward collectedness for prayer consist? I answer, we must not pray merely, in order to pray; but we must pray to have and obtain something; that all our inclinations and desires be directed to the object for which we pray, in such a manner, that we fervently wish and desire it; and that we seek it with the same ardent desires, with which the lovers of the world seek and gather together earthly treasures. In one word, it consists in this, that *the heart be entirely drawn away from the earth unto God.*

Therefore it is not sufficient for the individual to separate and remove himself, with respect to the body, from other men, and the affairs of the world; he must also entirely separate and abstract himself from them, as it regards the mind and spirit; he must forget them in such a manner, as if they did not exist; as if there were nothing in existence but God and himself. All imagery and attachments must here vanish entirely, and the majestic glory of God and his kingdom must alone be present to our eyes, occupy and take possession of our hearts; and thus the whole man must be engaged in prayer. That, which is expressed in words, must really be the feeling of the heart. As a hen collects her chickens under her wings, so must we let ourselves

be brought, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, from the world and the distractions of the mind, again to our hearts, be led back into our interior, and place ourselves in the presence of God, in order to be able to worship him, in spirit and in truth, and pour out our hearts in filial reverence and confidence before him. O what blessings, what abundance of grace may thus be obtained ! I could wish that every one knew how to speak of it from vital experience, since it cannot be sufficiently expressed in words ! The Holy Spirit is not something tangible by the outward senses, that can be heard, seen, and handled : it is an inward, spirituous, and secret power, which manifests itself only in the heart, and hence is only felt by the heart. If, therefore, we are always occupied with the temporal things of this world, and never at home—if we never come to ourselves, but continually flutter about, from one outward thing to another—how can the Holy Spirit take up his residence with us ? How can he carry on his work in our hearts, thus entirely directed to outward things, and burdened with so many earthly cares ?

From hence, my dear friends ! you may perceive how necessary this inward collectedness of the heart is, connected with that which is outward, and that the neglect of it is the sole cause why the most noble graces are frequently trifled away, and the most powerful attractions and influences of the Holy Spirit rendered void and powerless. It appears to me, just as if some one, who had a dear friend with him, who was come to visit him, instead of endea-

vouring to make his time pass agreeably, should be continually at the window, in order to see what the children were doing in the street. How culpable would such behaviour be ; supposing, at the same time, that the good friend was some special high personage, a prince, a king, or an emperor ! Would not such a friend, such a royal personage say, with great propriety, ‘I see clearly, thou dost not regard me, and that my visit is not agreeable to thee !’ Now, the Holy Spirit, who is much more than a prince or a king, yea, who is the King of all kings, and who is able and willing to impart to us substantial and ever-during blessings, comes to visit us ; he desires to be admitted into the closet of our hearts ; it is his will, that for his sake, we divest ourselves a little of temporal affairs, in order to listen to him, and converse with him. Ought we not therefore to sit down a little ? Ought we not to recollect ourselves ? Ought not our whole devotion to be engaged, and all our thoughts be directed to this object ? We should then, in such a serenity, and in such a reverence in the presence of God, experience much of the powers of the world to come ; yea, often experience, in a quarter of an hour, in a single moment, more blessing, life, power, and salvation, than we could obtain during our whole lives by our own acting and doing.

But we refuse him this, under the pretence, that worldly occupations leave us no time for it. Now are we not acting just like the very unfriendly host above mentioned, whom child’s-play delighted more than

the presence of his best friend? What are our worldly engagements and occupations, compared with heavenly blessings and a blissful eternity, other than childish efforts and past-time? What are they, compared with our immortal spirit, which does not participate in them, in the least, which are not of the smallest benefit to it, but may do it much injury; I say, what are they, but tedious idleness, and serious childishness? But is it possible, that for the sake of these trifles, yea, these worthless things, we can turn our backs upon our best friend, our dearest heavenly Father, Redeemer, and Saviour, nay, the King of all kings? that we are unwilling to break off, even a few hours, in order to hear what our best friend, what the Lord speaks? Has he not therefore also the greatest right to reproach us in the same manner, and to say, '*I see clearly, that you do not regard me, that my gracious visit is not agreeable to you!*' O my beloved friends! such like coldness, such like ill-treatment evidently proves, that the case is the same with us, as is written concerning the boy Samuel:—"Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him." (1 Sam. iii. 7.) If we had only the smallest idea of the value of this friend; if we had tasted, even in the smallest degree, the blessedness which flows from intercourse with him; could we act so coldly towards him, and prefer the society of the world, to fellowship with him? could we sacrifice it even for the veriest trifles, and give it up, like Esau, for a miserable mess of pottage?

Seeing therefore, my beloved friends ! that we do not yet sufficiently know the Lord, and that the fault is simply and solely this, that we have withdrawn ourselves far too much from our hearts, and the chief object of our existence here below, have entered too deeply into the things of this world, and have never sufficiently torn ourselves away from these distractions—let us therefore, while it is called to-day, at length seriously begin to collect our thoughts, withdraw them from the minor objects of this life, and direct them to the principal object ! Let us forget what is behind, and reach forth to that which is before ; and then will the loving kindness of God our Saviour appear to us ; we shall taste the heavenly gift, the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come ; we shall become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and, as already mentioned, experience often, in a quarter of an hour—nay, in one moment, more life, blessing, power, and salvation, than we could obtain, during our intercourse with the world, with our own acting and doing, in our whole lives.

Thus it is, that the Holy Spirit will come to us. But if the world has become master of our hearts, and taken possession of them, he cannot enter into them, nor take up his abode within them. Therefore, in order that he may abide in us, it is indispensably requisite, that our hearts be completely divested of every thing that is not God, and that does not lead to him, be totally emptied and given up to the Holy Spirit alone, for an habitation. For when we let ourselves

be inwardly collected by the Holy Spirit, we shall soon celebrate a day of Pentecost; and soon be filled with the Holy Ghost.

V.—The fifth and last necessary preparative for the reception of the Holy Spirit is *the unwearied waiting and watching for the real coming of the Holy Spirit, in the blessed exercise of prayer*. The first disciples and believers had indeed the promise, that the Holy Spirit should be sent and imparted to them, even as we, eternal praise and thanks be to God! likewise possess it; but at what time and hour he would come, was not told them; doubtless, in order that they might hold themselves in readiness, every day—yea, every hour and moment for his coming. Hence they waited, not only two or three days, but even ten whole days together for his coming. Their reason might have thought, and come to this conclusion: ‘We have already waited so many days, and yet nothing has transpired. We will now go home again, and meet together again after some time.’ No, my dear friends! the first-born believers did not act thus; but they continued true to their text; they remained with one accord together, and continued incessantly in prayer and supplication; and I feel assured, that they would not have become weary of it, if they had had to wait another ten days longer. Now it is this very state of mind, my dearest friends! which is required of us. God has waited so long for us, for me and you, for some ten, for others twenty or thirty years, and we,

are unwilling to wait a little while for him? He will assuredly not let us wait as long for him, as he has been obliged to wait for us.

But that our watching and waiting may be of a proper kind, and be successful, we must turn entirely away from all created things, and appear in the presence of God, with a heart entirely empty, and hungering and thirsting after grace, so that we may boldly say, 'Lord, here is my vessel, here I wait, here I continue lying on the brink of the waters; here, O my God! I expect the promised power from on high, with perfect resignation and in child-like confidence, that thou wilt, in due time, fulfil thy promise! Thou hast promised thy Holy Spirit to me; and thou wilt also perform. Do not look at my poverty and wretchedness, my nakedness and destitution; for it is for this very reason I need thy grace the most; on this very account I am worthy of compassion.'

It is thus that a soul, which is entirely turned away from the world, and directed to God, and which hungers and thirsts after God, waits in a right and proper manner, and therefore shall be filled with the blessings of salvation, and most assuredly made partaker of the Holy Spirit. When the beggar, at the door, has said, 'Give me a morsel of bread!' he does not immediately go away, but waits; and if he is left to stand long, he repeats his request, again and again, until he has really received what he desires. And although he be refused, yet he continues to beg, and does not move until he be attended to. So

ought we also to act. We must stand at the door of God's grace, and wait, until we have received what we ask for. And though it may often seem, as though he would not hear us ; yet we ought still to continue our requests, and not move, until he has really granted us his favours, and fulfilled his promise in us. If it sometimes seems long to us, so that we are compelled to exclaim, ' Lord, how long will thou be unmindful of us ? How long dost thou hide thy face from us ? My soul is in terror ! O Lord, how long ! ' Yet we ought still to be of good courage, and firmly believe, that help will come, at an hour when we least expect it ; that he will suddenly and all at once hasten to us, comfort, and refresh us, even as he did his dear disciples, to whom, after long waiting, he at length, all at once and instantaneously appeared. " And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and filled the whole house where they were sitting." Thus suddenly does it occur, in the present day, with many souls. Many, who, with all sincerity of heart, have frequently waited, sighed, and prayed, for many years together, are sometimes suddenly and unexpectedly endued with power from on high ; and when they have almost given it up for lost, and are saying to themselves, ' it is over with us, the Lord has forgotten us ; ' he suddenly comes, all at once, to put to shame their little faith, and lets the light of his grace shine upon them.

Therefore, my dearest friends ! though we may have to wait ever so long, nay, even till our dying-

hour ; yet it would still repay the trouble ; it would even then be an invaluable favor, to receive the Holy Ghost, as a comforter in all our necessities. Therefore, my beloved ! who, like myself, have long waited, hungered, and thirsted, long stood before the Lord, in prayer and supplication, and have long held the vessels of your hearts open : let us not grow weary. It deserves to be waited for a hundred, nay even a thousand years. They that have had the slightest experience of it, must confess and say, that such a moment sufficiently repays and rewards a hundred years of waiting. O how shall we feel, when we eventually live to see a day of Pentecost ! What sweet joys, what blessedness shall we feel, when we perceive and experience, that the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Jesus Christ dwells in our hearts, and reveals himself in our spirits ! What shall we then experience ? I will tell you. We shall experience that the sanctifying Spirit will exalt God and his kingdom within us, and on the contrary, that he will cast us down and every thing of a created nature within us, to the ground, and cause us to have the greatest contempt for it. We shall experience, that every thing, out of God, is nothing ; but that God is all in all ; that he is the treasure hid in the field, for the sake of which, the man sells all ; and that the reason why we have hitherto found it so difficult to follow him in this, and to give up the trifling things of this mortal state, for the sake of this treasure : is solely because there was still

within us, a hidden and unknown God, although we mistakenly imagined, that we had already found and experienced him.

I have said, that the Holy Ghost will exalt God and his kingdom, and on the contrary, cast down all created things within us, and bring them into contempt. This is expressed in the second verse of the words we have read, when it is said, "And there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and filled the whole house, where they were sitting." This is a principal effect, and a very perceptible property of the pentecostal Spirit. The more the Spirit of Jesus Christ enters into the heart, the more will the world and the creature be cast down in it, by his power, as by a mighty wind. As great and estimable, as they may have previously been in our eyes: so little and despicable are they now. As much as we were satisfied with ourselves before: so miserable are we now in our own eyes, and we henceforth regard ourselves as the most wretched and despicable of men. We then recognize the utter nakedness and nothingness of all that we have hitherto admired, esteemed, sought, and loved, because that season, that pentecost has reached us, of which it is predicted, saying, "the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden under foot, and the Lord of Hosts alone shall be for a crown of glory and for a diadem of beauty to the residue of his people;" (Isa. xxviii.) that "the day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon every one that

is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low, and the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." (Chap. ii. 12—18.) On this pentecost, therefore, will all that is earthly and transitory in the individual, be humbled and annihilated. O how worthless, how utterly worthless will all created things, which men so highly esteem, and regard as important appear, when the uncreated eternal Good, manifests itself in their hearts! They will then be unable sufficiently to wonder at their former blindness, nor comprehend how it was possible, they could so mistake, as to prefer the shadow to the substance, forsake the living fountain, and hew out to themselves broken cisterns, that can hold no water. The disregard of earthly things and of ourselves also, is the first and essential operation of the holy pentecostal Spirit.

This Spirit, secondly, enkindles in our hearts the love of God and of Jesus Christ. "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and sat upon each of them." This Spirit becomes a fire in the heart, which was previously cold, and inflames it with holy love towards God and Christ; by it, the heart is made glowing and ardent. For when the fiery wind, the divine fire of love, enters into the heart: every thing, that is earthly and transitory is cast down to the ground: but God alone is highly valued and esteemed. The individual feels within him the tenderest affection towards his

God and Saviour. Hence Christ says of the Holy Spirit, "When he shall come, he will glorify me." (John xvi.) What is meant by this? It implies thus much, that he will make known and reveal him to mankind as their Lord and God, as their Redeemer and Saviour; and also cause every knee to bow before him, as the only begotten Son of God; because no man can call him Lord, without the Holy Spirit. In a soul, therefore, in which the Holy Spirit finds an abiding dwelling, and in which he can firmly establish himself—in such a soul is Christ glorified, in the centre of the heart, and valued, honored, and loved supremely. The individual could previously pronounce with coldness, and in a superficial manner, the precious words, 'Jesus, dearest Lord!' But now his inmost part adores, as often as he even only thinks of God, and him, whom he hath sent, Jesus Christ. This knowledge of God causes all that is within him to rejoice and to esteem itself blessed. Now the more we despise the world, and all that is in it—the more we depart from ourselves—the more God and Christ are our lot and our portion—the more abundantly have we received the holy pentecostal Spirit, and the more full we are of it. "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Now this is the third operation of the Holy Pentecostal Spirit, that when he enters into the heart, he fills it entirely, so that the world finds no more room or place in it, because this guest, makes himself sole

Lord and Master of it. The first disciples and believers were so entirely taken possession of by this blissful dominion of the Pentecostal Spirit, that they were no longer master of their own tongues or any other member, but were compelled as it were, to speak, even as the Spirit gave them utterance. They could no longer speak, according to their own judgment, knowledge, and learning. No! they were constrained to do and speak as the Holy Spirit would have them. Thus it fares with every one, with whom the Holy Spirit takes up his residence; he then experiences the blissful dominion of our Lord Jesus Christ in his heart. The Holy Spirit is then the sceptre, which is sent forth out of Zion into our hearts; for he takes possession of all our will and desire, all our actions and deportment, all our inclinations and affections, and makes us entirely subject to him. He dwells in our hearts, like a king of the realm in his palace; he ordains and accomplishes in us that, which is pleasing and acceptable to him; he creates in us another principle and beginning of life; he becomes to the soul, as it were, the life of her life; he renews her daily, more and more, in the image of him that created her, and forms her into a temple of truth and righteousness, yea to a living temple of God and Jesus Christ. All the glory of earthly kings and princes are only vain shadows and child's-play compared with a single pentecostal heart, which is deemed worthy of receiving the Spirit of Jesus Christ, in such plenitude.

Now see, my dearest friends, to be brief, such

great things has the Lord our God in store for us ! Therefore, why do we stop short at mean and inferior things, nay at real shadows, and child's play ? Why do we cleave, like the brute beasts, continually to the earth ? Why do we root, like the mole, for such things, which can never satiate, never satisfy, never afford rest to our immortal spirits ? God has created and redeemed us, in order that we may become partakers of his divine nature and living temples of the Holy Spirit. Now, how does our conduct accord with this most sacred intention of God, if it only loves what is earthly, and makes it evident, that we are not heavenly, but earthly and carnal minded ? Every heart has the nature of that, of whose spirit and sentiment it is possessed, and by which it is governed. If the spirit and the fashion of this world govern us, we have an earthly and carnal nature, and as many vices within us, as a carnally-minded heart, impregnated with the spirit of the world, is wont to breed, and can consequently have as little intercourse with God, as little as we are partakers of the divine nature. If the Spirit of God and Jesus Christ possesses or leads us, we have a divine nature, and are thus capable of acting as temples of the Holy Spirit, and of being most intimately united with God.

Now then, my dear brethren and fellow-called ! let us with the divine assistance press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, with all possible earnestness. Let us so run, in the course, the race which God has set

before us, that we may obtain, and to this end; abstain as much as possible from all other things ! Truly, since so great a fulness is promised us, let us most greedily seize hold of it ! let us continually watch and be sober, and look, every one at each other, to incite him forward. And if it be, that as a despised little flock, we are scorned and persecuted with Christ, let us look unto Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of faith, who, although he might have possessed joy, endured the cross, despising the shame. (Heb. xii. 2.) Now, as our head is gone before us in the path of the cross, ought we not willingly and gladly, as his members, to follow him ? How shameful would it be for a soldier, if, in battle, he would not follow his commander-in-chief, when going before him, but drew back ! Therefore, as a valiant soldier not only considers it his duty, but even the greatest honor to follow his general, step by step, and to suffer every inconvenience with him, so ought we, if we wish to be true members and soldiers of Christ, not only to esteem it our duty, but all joy and the greatest honor, when it is granted us to suffer for Christ's sake. O happy are we, when we can say, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter !" For "if we suffer with him, we shall also be exalted with him to glory." These light afflictions, which are but temporary, will yield us an eternal and exceeding weight of glory. Let the world continue to laugh at and ridicule us, because we do not run to the same excesses as they

do: we know that the Spirit, which rests upon us, is the Spirit of glory and of God; on their part, he is blasphemed, but on our part he is glorified." (1 Peter iv. 4—14.) We know that the beauty of the children of God is not outward, but consists in the hidden man of the heart, immoveable, in a quiet spirit. "Yea, we know, that our life is hid with Christ in God, and that when Christ who is our life shall appear, on the great day of the third general manifestation in glory: we also shall appear with him in glory." (Col. iii. 3, 4.) Amen. Thus be it unto us!

We have now heard weak and imperfect words. We must have spirit, we must have power, from above, that we may apply the word we have attended to, to the salvation of our souls. Bow yourselves therefore with me, most humbly, before the ever-present Saviour. Let us unanimously, with believing hearts and ardent desires, call upon him to grant us his gracious influences and his blessing, and thus pour out our hearts before him.

PRAYER.

O Lord Jesus! who art anointed with the balm of the Holy Spirit without measure, who hast purchased gifts for us, invaluable gifts, infinite gifts! We desire to honor thee, as the only source of all good, which we are able to receive in time and eternity. Let our hearts adore, praise, and love thee, thou great restorer, for having so deeply condes-

cended to us, poor mortals, to us poor children of men, as to take upon thee our body, soul, and spirit, in order, by this most intimate union, to become such a one, by whose means, the life of God might be again imparted to us, thy fellow creatures.

Sweetest Saviour, Jesus! we have meditated upon thee, as the exalted One at the right hand of the Father, on the throne of thy glory; we now desire to honor and adore thee as such, by thy Holy Spirit. O let thy Holy Spirit, who has granted us this pleasing and unexpected opportunity of testifying of thee at this time—let this Spirit glorify thyself and thy truth in all our hearts! O that it may not be merely words, that it may not be a passing sound, but may it be and continue to be a *power* in the hearts of each of us! O Lord Jesus, make up, by the power of thy Spirit, for the imperfection of all our discourses! Let thy Holy Spirit become more and more master of our tongues, and teach us to declare the wonderful works of our God, that, inwardly animated by this Spirit, we may increasingly know, love and experience thee, our Saviour, in our hearts, as the true life. Blessed Jesus! thou knowest the souls of all now before thee. O dearest Saviour! do we possess thy Spirit, or is the spirit of the world still Lord and Master in many or any of our hearts?

Now, thou all-searching Spirit, and thou only light, go from heart to heart, search us and try us, and examine what our intention is, whether we give

room to thy Spirit, or to the spirit of the world in our hearts; who it is that rules over us, who it is that governs in us. Dearest Saviour! are there any here, who have hitherto been slaves of Satan, who have hitherto let themselves be filled with such infernal powers, and unhappily suffer themselves to be ruled by a Master, whom they themselves are unwilling to acknowledge? O inspire them with a holy terror! let thy Spirit in the exercise of his office as a reprover, sacredly disturb their hearts, in order that they may now submit themselves to thy gracious sceptre! Yea, search us, O Lord! try every one of us, whether thy Spirit still finds something to reprove in us, whether there is not still something worldly, something vain, something impure in us, which cannot stand before thy pure and glorious eyes. O Lord Jesus, let it be this moment discovered by thy Holy Spirit, reprov'd by thy Spirit, removed by thy Spirit, and by thy gracious judgments! Say unto each of our hearts, "Cast out, what thou hast in thy mouth, that tastes of the bitter waters, in order that the chrystal stream in thy centre, may become a clear spring, and a river of God.

O thou fountain of eternal love and grace, teach us, with unwearied desire to hunger after thee; teach us to preserve ourselves from all false security and false liberty, in the course and conflict we have commenced! O dearest Jesus! who didst so frequently rouse thy disciples when inclined to slumber; awaken us to alacrity and to fresh earnestness

and animation, that we may also begin to give room to thy Spirit in our hearts, and cast ourselves anew at thy feet, for the purpose of renewing our covenant with thee, our Saviour.

Do thou also, Lord Jesus ! remove from the souls thou hast called, all offences and stumbling-blocks, and conduct them into love and brotherly unanimity. By thy Spirit of love, let us be made more simple, more childlike. O that those may become one heart and one soul, who are called in thee, the Eternal one, to the same eternal good and the same blissful country ! O inflame our hearts with love to thee ; inflame them with pure love to thee, and to each other ; do thou bind and unite us in one mind, that as united, we may, with the desires of our hearts, bear down thy Spirit upon us ; especially do thou favor us with fresh devotion in prayer.

O Lord Jesus, teach us by thy Spirit ; teach thy servant and all present, what it is to pray aright ; how we ought to recollect ourselves from all dissipation of spirit, and be silent before thee ; how we ought to believe in thee as present, honour thee as present, wait upon thee as present, and not be weary ! O Lord Jesus, thou didst bless thy disciples, when thou didst ascend to heaven, so that they could quietly sit and wait, and not be weary ; bless us therefore also, Lord Jesus ! with this grace, that we may possess collected hearts, and praying, find thee more and more and thy Holy Spirit in our hearts !

O Lord Jesus ! strengthen us in courage and in

faith, that we may not grow faint nor despond, and although we may have to wait, and to wait long ; do thou at length arise with power from on high, in these latter days ; and as thou hast already, as a wind, cast down so many hearts, and rendered them subject to the sceptre of thy grace, move also in a more general manner ; let many thousands be called unto thee. O let the promise in the prophets be more completely fulfilled, and may thy Spirit be poured out upon all flesh, that old and young, children, youths, and maidens, may prophecy, and the whole earth be filled with thy Spirit !

O Lord Jesus ! grant, especially, that it may be said anew of us, respecting thy Spirit, they were all full of the Holy Spirit ! Here are vessels ; fill, in the hearts of all of us, every empty vessel, which thou canst fill. O give us at least a drop ; let us not go away cold nor hungry from hence ; let us not keep the day of Pentecost, without experiencing something of thy Spirit ! O eternal Spirit of power and love, descend from on high, and be Lord and Master in every heart, that we may be translated, more and more, from the image of Satan and his kingdom into the kingdom of light, and be transformed into the image of our God, from glory to glory.

Worthy and holy Spirit of grace, be continually our guest ; be our constant guide in the narrow path to eternity ; and when, at length, we lay down our heads on our dying beds, and endure the last conflict and the mortal blow, O let thy Spirit be our comforter in all our necessities, who is able to

tranquillize our souls, who bears witness with our spirits that we are thy children, and who is able to impress the seal upon our hearts, that we may eternally behold thy face! Now unto God the Father, Son, and Spirit, the thrice-blessed God, be glory both now and for ever and ever. Amen.

ON GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT.

GOD be merciful unto us, and bless us ; cause his face to shine upon us, and enlighten us unto eternal life ! May his Spirit inflame our hearts and minds, and draw us entirely to eternal things !

I find myself once more obliged, contrary to all expectation, to speak a word of edification to you, who, I trust, are come hither with hungry hearts. I submit myself most humbly to divine providence, looking with the eye of faith unto him, who is our Lord and High Priest, that he would manifest himself powerfully on this occasion, as well in me, as in all those, who are here present in his sight. So much the more, therefore, ought I, and all of us to fall at the Lord's feet, and implore his gracious and blissful presence.

PRAYER.

Amen, O Lord our God, thrice holy Lord God of Sabaoth ! whom all the seraphim and cherubim worship and humbly adore ; who hast also called us men to thine eternal adoration and fellowship. Let every thing within us, at this moment, bow before

thee, and give thee the glory due unto thee, by the operation of thy Holy Spirit. Thou art our God, and we are thy creatures; thou art our Potter and we are thy clay; thou art, in Christ, our redeemer and merciful God, and we have met together, before thy face, in order to edify one another, and to incite each other to thy service. Love, veneration, and adoration be unto thee, O Lord our God! who hast promised to inhabit the praises of Israel, where thy face is sought, and thy name is glorified and loved. Now, wherefore are we met together on this occasion? Has not thy divine providence so ordered it? Is there not a hunger in the hearts of those, now present, to hear *thy word*, and not the words of man? and to become acquainted with thy truth, in order to devote themselves to it with their whole hearts? O thou that triest the heart and the reins; who art he that walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks, come then and visit my heart, and the hearts of all present! come and see, whether we appear here, at this time, with such a simple and sincere intention!

Now thanks be unto thee for this grace and goodness! Thanks be unto thee for the precious freedom and excellent opportunity, which thou grantest unto us before others, to enable us to attain to thy saving knowledge, love, and fellowship. But ah, Lord, Lord! thou knowest, that without thy gracious indwelling, we cannot promise ourselves any thing edifying, any thing which shall produce fruit, much less obtain it. O do thou therefore manifest

thyself gracious, present, and powerful, with thy Holy Spirit, both in the heart of him that shall speak, and in the hearts of those that shall hear ! Lord, thou knowest, that I know nothing, that I am nothing, that I have nothing in thy spiritual sight. O let, therefore, thy power evidence itself mightily in my spiritual and bodily weakness ! solely, in order that thou mayest be honoured and glorified, and that every soul present may be rendered subject to our King of Glory and ever blessed God !

O Lord Jesus ! who, by thy blood and entering into the most holy place, hast promised us thy Holy Spirit, and didst so richly bestow him on thy first believers, on the day of Pentecost : O send also thy Spirit from above into all our hearts ! Let this Spirit, who bestows tongues of flame, also guide and govern my stammering and imperfect tongue, that I may declare thy mighty acts and truths, for the benefit of all present. O look not upon our unworthiness ; look not at our state, which has been hitherto so unlike thee and so displeasing to thee ! Let all our sins be graciously blotted out by the blood of Jesus ; and let thy favor be continually directed towards us, in him, who is our High Priest ; and though thousands may not be converted to thee on this day : let, at least, the hearts of some be affected, converted, strengthened, and encouraged to devote themselves with new solicitude and zeal, to submit to and tread in thy ways, with more fidelity, in order that thou, O Lord Jesus Christ ! may, by thy Holy Spirit, be glorified and magnified in our hearts.

Thou hast promised, that the Spirit, whom thou wouldst send down from on high, shall manifest, glorify, and magnify thee. Therefore, O Jesus! let us become little, let us become nothing, let every thing become insignificant in our hearts and eyes! Be thou alone great, become glorious, reign in the midst of thine enemies, in the midst of our hearts. We expect all, from free grace, for the sake of thy most sweet and blessed Jesu's name. Amen.

The words, which unpremeditatedly occurred to me to take, for the subject of our edification on this occasion, stand written in

EPHES. iv. 30.

“Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

We spoke yesterday, with the divine assistance, upon the necessary preparatives in order to be able to receive the Holy Spirit. We will now, with the Lord's help, and under divine influence, mutually consider the duty incumbent upon us, of treating, in a becoming manner, the noble guest we have received from God. “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in order that as believers, ye may be sealed unto the day of redemption.”

Ah! if we children of men knew and took to

heart the high and adorable intentions of the Lord our God with us; and if we recognised what a glorious creature man is, what a high dignity man possesses, with respect to his soul and his inward love; we would not esteem our souls so lightly, we would not care, in such a manner, for the miserable, transitory, and corruptible body; and least of all, make a god of it. Ah! we should value ourselves much too highly, and esteem ourselves much too noble, to condescend in such a base manner to the things of this world, which are so despicable and inferior; and to that, which is temporal and transitory, which is still so infinitely beneath us. Man was created by God in a very dignified state; when he is called 'a child of God,' it is no mere appellation, but something substantial and extremely exalted. If we turn to the third chapter of Luke, where the genealogy of Joseph, back to Adam is recounted: we find it is said, 'Joseph was the Son of Eli, and so on, until it comes to Adam,' where it is said, 'But Adam was of God,' that is, a Son of God. For God, in the beginning, created man after his own image, and breathed into him his own Spirit, the Spirit from God, as we may read, concerning the creation of man, in Gen. i. God breathed his Spirit into man, he created him after his own image, with well matured counsel, saying, "Let us make man after our own image." Even as a child, for instance, bears the image, nature, and qualities of its father; so God, at the first creation of man, breathed into him his own Spirit, and, by this means, impressed

his image, his properties, and his character upon him; so that man, according to his original form, was like unto God. O what a high dignity, that man should be created after the image of God! For it is not something merely appended externally, but something most essential, that is breathed into all men, and impressed upon all the children of men.

Man received, by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, at his creation, the image of God—that is, there was, by this means, imparted to man, an infinite desire and longing, which could be satisfied and satiated with nothing, but with God himself: and not only was there such a boundless and inextinguishable desire implanted in him, but, by this means, were also imparted to him, heavenly and divine capabilities, so that man, as it respects his soul and his spirit, was in a state to behold his God, to know his God, to love his God, to glorify his God, and to enjoy his God to all eternity. By means of this likeness, therefore, heavenly and divine perfections were impressed upon man, as far as a creature can be capable of divine perfections; that is, man, by the gift of God, was essentially clothed with the true righteousness and holiness of God, the divine virtues of innocence, simplicity, truth, purity, and all other communicable properties.

Man had not, however, within him, heavenly and divine perfections alone, but he also possessed within him, heavenly, divine, and paradisaic pleasures, delights, and enjoyments. As respects his

most noble part, he delighted himself in God alone, pleased himself in the contemplation of his God, in embracing his God, in the enjoyment of his God, and his divine communications; and in his inmost part, he found him worthy of an unspeakable adoration and admiration; yet man enjoyed, as regards his soul and inward part, angelic blessedness and paradisaic delights in every way and manner. In a word, man was a lord and king over the whole creation; heaven and earth, and as far as the man's view extended, all things stood at his command, so that all creatures were subject to his behest. In all these respects was the divine image thus deeply impressed upon man.

But now, alas! as is well known, man is fallen from such a noble state, having subjected his heart and his will to the Serpent; by which means, this primary uncreated image is extinguished in man, and the divine light, delight, and glory has withdrawn itself from the spirit and soul of man. By this fatal withdrawment from God, he has also become a gloomy creature as regards his interior, the divine image, the characteristic of God, and all his divine perfections have been entirely wasted, desolated, and eradicated; and not only so, but instead of the divine image, which man bore with respect to his creation, instead of the former divine and heavenly perfections and virtues, he obtained nothing but imperfections and vices, the image of the sinful Adam, the image of the earthy, the image of an entirely natural man; and not only so, but

man has received the image of the devil into his heart, his impress and impressions, so that man, in his natural state, bears the image of the devil.

After Adam was fallen, it is said in Gen. v. "Adam begat a son in his own image." This was, therefore, no longer the image of God, but it was that of an earthly natural man. But that man, in his unconverted natural state, bears the image of the devil upon him. Jesus himself tells us, when he said to the Pharisees, and the other obstinate Jews, 'Abraham is not your father; but ye are of your father the devil,' whose dispositions they really manifested.

Man bears indeed, even still, after the fall, the very same inextinguishable and boundless desires after a satisfying good, light, and life, in his interior, but much obscured, weakened, and defective, and in a very confused way and manner, so that the man really knows not where he ought to seek and find pleasure. Man has also, since the fall, still some capability (when God in Christ again grants grace), to know, love, and glorify his God, and be clothed with his virtues; but this is imperfect and defective in the highest degree; so that, instead of the former light, he possesses really nothing but darkness: instead of the former heavenly and divine inclinations, which he possessed in his state of innocence, he now cherishes, in his soul, no other than reprobate and highly sinful impulses and desires. What devilish inclinations impel the man to pride, lust, self-will, and every kind of resistance against God, the supreme good! His desires, which ought to be di-

rected solely to God and to heavenly things, now, on the contrary, tend wholly to earthly and transitory things, nay, to such things, as in themselves, possess nothing substantial, nothing abiding, and nothing beatifying.

Since man, therefore, in his natural state, finds his heart filled with such evil inclinations, we bear, according to our birth from Adam, the image of an earthly and natural man. Yes, my dear friends ! you and I, and all of us, bear by nature, the image of Satan ; and therefore the infinite desire for rest, light, and pleasure, which has remained over to man, only serves as his hell and his torment, in so far as it is not rightly directed ; and because man, by sin, is entirely darkened, and cannot find the true source of light, rest, and life, he therefore falls from one vanity upon another ; he seeks enjoyment first here, and then there ; at one time he thinks he finds it in money and wealth ; at another in honour and voluptuousness, and sensual delights, and therefore resorts, with his hungry desires, to these worthless things, like swine to the husks. He thinks to satiate and satisfy his soul with them ; but this would never be the case to all eternity.

Now, in order that man may be replaced in his former blissful condition, he must receive help from above ; for since he lies, in such a manner, in his misery and his mire ; as long as he is not really converted by the grace of God, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit, it fares with him, notwithstanding all his own efforts to help himself, as with a child which has

fallen into deep mire, that only seeks to catch hold of the mire, and struggles with its hands ; but the more it involves itself in the dirt, the more filthy and weak does it become. And thus it is with all the exertions of a natural man. The more he seeks to pacify his soul with these vain and empty things, the more hungry, needy, and wretched does he feel ; and the more he deprives it of the divine image, and impresses upon it an infernal form, so that there remains nothing more of the pure Spirit, which emanated from God, but only an abominable figure of the man's own hatefulness.

Now there was no other method for man's restoration than this, that the Son of God himself should come forth from the bosom of God. He, who was the express image of the essential being of God, was obliged to take our miserable image upon himself, and to descend into our wretched humanity, in order that, as Mediator, he might again reconcile us by himself, breathe into us his precious Holy Spirit, and again impress us with the impression of his Spirit, and with his seal upon our hearts, that from creatures of darkness, we might be made children of light, images of our God, and rendered happy.

Therefore, my dear friends ! in order to be pious and blessed, it will not avail to do one thing and omit another ; to assume an hypocritical appearance, dissemble, and imitate ; but we must be born again of the Spirit, renewed into the divine image, and made partakers of the divine nature ; even as our

dear Saviour says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii.) Observe! we have lost the Spirit by the fall; and we must again obtain the Spirit, in order to be saved. God, in the beginning, had impressed his Spirit upon us; but the devil's spirit has established its image in its place. Now we must be born again. Even as a child, that is born of its natural parent, possesses the father's nature and properties; so must we be again entirely renewed. This takes place, when the Holy Spirit, in his primary operations, discovers to us our miserable disgrace, so that we perceive ourselves in our wretched and abominable condition, and how we are become such dreadful and hideous figures, in the sight of God, of his angels, and of enlightened men.

Now when this is properly made manifest to us, so that the individual begins to have a disgust at himself, and at his natural state, and to be terrified, shudder, and tremble at it, and thinks at the same time, it is scarcely possible that such a monster can dwell with so holy a God, in everlasting light, and that with regard to himself, after all his expedients, which he had sought in vanity, are cut off, he now feels like the prodigal son, when the husks of this world are no longer afforded him, and when he can relish them no more—I mean, when a man, after all his striving after honour, riches, lust, pleasure, and other vanities, can, nevertheless, find no rest nor satisfaction, and therefore perceives that these are not the things which can give his immortal

spirit its real nourishment and true life, and that he can consequently no longer rest upon such delusive supports; and besides this, painfully repents having so shamefully dishonoured and trifled with the image of his heavenly Father, and taken upon himself in its stead the image of Satan, and therefore acknowledges that he is entirely unworthy of being henceforth called his child; it is then that regeneration *begins*, although it is not regeneration itself.

Now, at such discoveries, at such inward sorrow, tribulation, and anguish, when the soul takes no more delight in itself and its vanities; it must resolve, with the prodigal son (whatever appearance it may present), to arise and go to the Father, and say, 'Father, I am not worthy to be called thy son.' Regeneration then proceeds further in the soul, namely, when the Holy Spirit, with his influences, finds more and more room in the soul, and instils good desires, good inclinations, good thoughts, and awakens in the individual a disgust at his evil and hateful sinful form. Now, when the soul stands still a little here, and at length resolves to resign itself by faith to Jesus, the seal is again impressed, and the heart no longer grieves the Holy Spirit, by whom it is sealed unto the day of redemption.

The sealing of the Holy Spirit, dearest friends! does not consist merely in experiencing some transient announcement, emotion, and touching of the heart. It is certainly an invaluable favour, that I feel even the smallest good thought in me; that I

have still the smallest good inclination and impression in my heart: but still this is not the sealing of the Holy Spirit. When the individual is placed in the state of repentance, he experiences unquestionably the operation of the Holy Spirit in his heart; for he it is, who makes the man restless, troubled, and perplexed; and it is like a strong rope thrown to the man, which he must hold fast, if he desires to obtain the sealing of the Holy Spirit.

But something more is implied by the seal being really re-impressed upon the soul. It implies that the happy hour, the happy state is now attained, when the individual, in his deformity, and damnable nature, under the burden of his sins, turns most humbly and believingly to Christ, embraces him, as his one and his all, with a true denial, thorough and complete renunciation of self, the world, and all transitory things, so that he accepts Jesus alone for his Mediator and Saviour, and resigns himself to him and to his divine will, with body and soul; this is called, in the Scriptures, faith in Christ; and as soon as faith in Christ springs up, the seal of the Holy Spirit is impressed upon the soul.

We see that this is the case in this very epistle to the Ephesians, ch. i. 13, 14, where Paul says, "By whom ye also have heard the word of truth, to wit, the gospel of your salvation, by whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession," that is, when the man experiences the

happy hour, in which, with due consideration and sincerity of heart, he resolves, as far as he knows, to bid adieu to all sin, and renounce himself and the world, acknowledging and confessing himself before the tribunal and face of God, as a creature deserving condemnation, and resigning himself entirely, as he is, to Jesus Christ and his mercy, in order to be atoned for by his blood, sanctified by his Spirit, and prepared to become a child of God.

This is just the happy moment, in which a contract is made between Jesus and the soul. This alliance is not a mere human impotent idea, but is an alliance sealed by the Holy Spirit in the heart, and, so to speak, is deposited, as a sealed document, in the heavenly chancery, for an eternal memorial. From that hour, and as long as the soul continues firm to this contract, the Lord acknowledges her as his ; she bears his image, his impress upon her ; the sign is again hung out before the door, even as some great man causes his armorial bearings to be put up, over his door, in order that every one may know what great man lives there. As soon as an individual, in real heartfelt faith, has thus given himself to Jesus as his property, he immediately hangs up this sign before the door : “ Here dwells a soul, which has given itself to Christ as his property, and therefore belongs entirely to him,” according to that which the Apostle says in the above quoted first chapter of this epistle, “ which is the earnest of our redemption until the purchased possession.” The man is

then become the property of God, the property of Jesus Christ.

It is certainly true, that the seal of the Holy Spirit, on such a soul, is still very soft and delicate ; the wax is not yet hardened ; it may still be injured ; it nevertheless really bears the divine image. Such an individual, I say, is regarded by Christ as belonging to him ; but he must also regard himself as one, who is God's property ; who has now renounced the strange spirit of the world and of darkness, and has paid homage to another monarch ; he must now be desirous of being sealed by the Holy Spirit of God, whom he has received into his heart, to whom he has given full authority, from thenceforth, to reign within him, to love and suffer, to eradicate the evil, to implant that which is good, and increasingly to restore the first original image in him, which was lost in Adam. O what a happiness it is, when an individual experiences this happy hour ! but if he has not yet experienced it, ought he not to devote every hour and every moment in order to experience it ? Ought he not, every hour and every moment, to ask himself the question, ' How do I stand with my God ? Whose image do I bear ? ' On that day, it will certainly not be asked, how wast thou outwardly called, or to what denomination didst thou belong : but this only will be asked, " Whose image and superscription is this ? what form dost thou bear ? "

Further : souls that have thus resigned themselves

to Jesus, are become quite different from what they were before ; they may now, henceforth, under the banner of their mighty monarch, their king, and their prince, boldly fight against sin, the world, and Satan ; for he must fear them more than they need to fear him. But as I have already said, this is only the initiatory impress and seal of the Holy Spirit, which, indeed, shines forth in some souls very perceptibly, since the Holy Spirit impresses upon them, a tender and child-like confidence towards God, so that they can now look upon him again as their *God*, nay, what is far more, as their Father ; so that they are able to say to him, in the most child-like manner, *Abba ! dear Father !* and are wholly tranquillized and frequently quite certain that their sins are forgiven them in Jesus Christ, that they have part in their Redeemer, and that they may rest assured, that they shall be able to stand in the day of their redemption—yet, with others, the thing is not so evident ; but still, in principle, it is not less essential, if the surrender of ourselves to God and Christ is sincere, and takes place without any reserve, and we continue resigned to him in such a disposition.

It is thus, my dear friends, that we may, and ought, and must regard ourselves, as those who are Christ's property, as men, who bear the impress of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. Many of little faith bear this noble treasure about with them in their hearts and know it not ; I mean a sincere and profound desire impressed upon their inmost souls, by which they hunger after something superior to all

that is not God, that is not Christ, and by which they most inwardly and completely long for the glorification of Christ ; that they may be only for ever redeemed from all vanity and imperfection, in order to be united to their dearest Redeemer, Jesus Christ. And this profound longing, and inward desire, is the very operation of the Holy Spirit, by which he seals the heart, so that the individual belongs in reality to the Holy Spirit, and has therefore no more part in the world, which belongs as little to him, as he belongs to the world.

O how noble, how blessed are such characters in their conversion and the surrender of themselves to God ! Who would not feel himself truly incited to seize even the first moment, in which God offers him grace ! God, says St. Paul, offers faith unto every man, and gives him this great privilege. Thou poor worm, thou poor sinner ! however thou mayest appear in thy infernal livery, only give thyself up to thy Saviour ; give him thy hand, and thou shalt experience complete atonement, purification, and renovation.

The Holy Spirit, however, impresses his seal more and more clearly and gloriously upon the individual, whilst daily renewing him by his holy operations, and his influences, after the image of him that created him, according to the words of Paul. He draws the heart more and more away from all natural depravity and evil qualities, and imparts his qualities to it, which are love, joy, peace, patience, meekness, and every divine virtue, in an increasing degree ; so

that the individual, by a believing and sincere adhesion to Jesus, puts off the old man, more and more, and on the contrary daily puts on the new man ; and thus regains, imperceptibly, and from pure grace, in his soul, the image of God, and his divine perfections and qualities, his light and his glory. Those who were the most wrathful men may become the most meek ; men, who, like swine, had given themselves up to all kinds of lasciviousness and sin, may become truly chaste and pure characters ; men, who, were the most covetous, may become so liberal, that they do not hesitate to imitate the first disciples, on the day of Pentecost, when they went and sold all that they had, and gave it to the poor ; since this very spirit delivers them from every thing earthly ; and thus it is also with all other divine virtues, qualities, and perfections, which are increasingly impressed, by this Holy Spirit and his influences, upon the inmost soul.

See, my dearest friends ! it is thus that we must let ourselves be made pious ; but we must not attempt it ourselves ; for we should never effect it. We may be able to give ourselves a form and figure, and to present such and such an appearance ; but ah ! this is not God's image ; that must be impressed upon us by the Holy Spirit in our interior. For even as a seal is pressed upon the wax ; so will the Holy Spirit also impress the virtues and qualities of God on our inmost souls.

Thirdly. This sealing comprises in it, also, the peculiarly established state of grace, of which St.

Paul says, that "it is God, who establishes us with you in Christ and hath anointed us ; who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." (2 Cor. i. 21, 22.) That is, when a person thus gives room to the renewing, sanctifying, and glorifying operations of the Spirit of Jesus in his heart: he becomes more and more established in this good and excellent state. Like as when a seal has been pressed awhile upon wax or sealing-wax, the latter at length becomes hard, so that it can no longer be easily effaced: so it is likewise with those souls, which resign themselves entirely to the Spirit and his gracious guidance and operations; they become more and more established in that which is good; and so firm a form is at length wrought in their inmost part, that that which is evil, is quite repugnant, and that which is good, on the contrary, becomes more and more natural to them, so that from their own voluntary impulse and entirely unconstrainedly, they avoid and flee from the former: but seek to accomplish the latter with all joyfulness. To do good, and to love and glorify God is their first and likewise their final work.

Now, there is something truly noble, lofty, and exalted, yea, truly divine, in having attained even only the first step and degree of this sealing. Jesus himself encourages the soul to this, in the Song of Solomon (Chap. viii.) when speaking to believers he says, "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, and as a seal upon thine arm." Jesus will not be satisfied with being carried only in the head, being thought of

only transiently, or with our being pious people only on Sundays and holidays ; no ! we must impress him as a seal upon our hearts, in order that the image of Jesus and his love alone be engraven there ; we must love him and no other ; we must be devoted to him, and to him alone ; our whole heart must become Jesus' heart, in order that he may impress his seal upon it ; with the inscription " This is my heart." This seal we must also impress upon our arm ; that is, upon our exterior, upon our whole deportment, that all may be able to see from it, that we belong to Jesus, may be able to see it from the impression, the sign, the walk, and conversation, that we are no longer such characters as wear the Devil's livery, and bear the old image ; but that we are men of God, who belong to Christ.

Now mark ! It is to this state, my beloved friends ! that we are all called ; and many amongst us, I doubt not, have received in them, at least, the first degree of such a sealing of the Holy Spirit ; there are those here, I am aware, who are resolved to devote themselves, with body and soul to Jesus as his property. Friends ! lift up your heads with me, and be not so downcast ; estimate your state higher. A prince must have princely thoughts, and perform princely actions. Ought we, who are become God's property, who bear his seal, the impress of a holy God upon us—ought we still to love outward things—ought we still to be lukewarm and slothful ? Ought we not rather to conduct ourselves nobly and magnanimously, to whom so great a grace has been

vouchsafed, in order that we may act according to so high a vocation ?

Having therefore obtained the mark of the Spirit in our hearts, let us every day hunger more and more after it, that the complete image of God may be manifested in us, that the seal of the second Adam, the seal, which God impressed upon us at our first creation, may be restored in us by a complete regeneration and renewal. O we ought to feel inwardly pained, we ought to be grieved, that we still find in us any of the smallest properties of the former state, walk, and conversation ! Let us, therefore, make more room for the Spirit ; for the promise is given to us and to our children, that we also are to have a day of Pentecost. O how soon did the Spirit, who descended on the day of Pentecost, break the Devil's seal in thousands, and impressed another seal in and upon their hearts, so that they became children of God ! It is thus that we ought the more willingly and unconditionally to resign ourselves to the motions of the Spirit of Jesus, and conduct ourselves in every way according to our rank.

“ Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” Souls that bear upon them the seal of the Holy Spirit, possess in this Spirit and his seal, a very sure and certain pledge, that the day of death shall be to them a day of atonement ; and that the day of judgment will be to them a day of redemption ; and if they have still much to hear and endure in them-

selves, though contrary to their entire and fervent will, yet they may rest assured, that finally, a day of redemption will come. They are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Those souls, who bear the image of God, the Holy Spirit, are always looked upon, by God, as his property. God regards them with good pleasure and delight. O it is something great, when it is said, "The foundation of God standeth sure; having this seal,—as Paul writes to Timothy,—the Lord knoweth them that are his!" He looks upon them as his own; he protects them as his own; he perfects them as his own. Souls which thus bear upon them, the image of God and his Holy Spirit, need not fear either the world or the devil. Such souls have become fair and lovely characters; but at the same time, "terrible as an army with banners." (Sol. Song vi.) The devil is afraid of such souls; he is terrified at the sign which hangs before the door; he sees clearly that another master is in the house, and that he dare not come a hair's-breadth too near them, without divine permission.

O how safely and securely do those walk, who bear, in their souls, the impress of the Holy Ghost! Neither need they be afraid of the world, even though they should be brought before kings and governors; for the world must shrink before such a manifestation in such characters; it must shrink before those, who belong so entirely to the Lord. People, indeed, do not themselves know what it is they respect, when they are abashed before the

pious ; but Peter tells us what it is, in his first epistle chap. iv. 14 verse, when he says, "Blessed are ye, if ye be reproached for the name of Christ, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you : on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified." Thus the Spirit of glory, of excellency, and of majesty, rests upon such hearts, as are thus sealed by God ; the world sees something, which it is compelled to respect, and of which it must stand in awe ; it cannot do with the children of God what it pleases, but it must have regard to that which is deposited in them by the Holy Spirit of God. Therefore, blessed are such souls !

But in order that we may entertain this guest according to his rank, following the direction of the words of our text, let us mutually consider—

The duty incumbent upon us to treat the Holy Spirit, we have received, in a becoming manner.

Which consists in this, that we ought not to grieve the Holy Spirit.

But we grieve the Holy Spirit,

I. When, according to our vocation and conviction, we do not faithfully follow his attractions, allurements, and admonitions.

II. By any species of dissimulation, when we endeavour to appear otherwise than we really are.

III. When we do not yield due obedience to the salutary counsels and requirements of the Holy Spirit.

IV. When we cherish any thing in our hearts, and

in our thoughts and words, which is contrary to the properties of the Holy Spirit.

V. By obstinacy and the unbrokenness of our wills.

VI. By suspicion, envy, hatred, and all kinds of uncharitableness.

VII. By unseasonable reflection on the ways of God.

VIII. By faintheartedness, unbelief, and doubts of his assistance.

I.—I will not here speak of those grievings of the Holy Spirit, by which men, who are still in a state of nature, so frequently and manifoldly grieve, and with which we also, have alas ! so long grieved him ; nor will I speak of those grievings, which may occur, during the first convictions and state of repentance, when a soul, which has not entirely confided itself to the Holy Spirit, assuredly grieves him ; but I will speak of those grievings, which chiefly occur, when such souls, upon whose hearts the seal has already been really impressed, and who have already devoted themselves with body and soul to their Jesus, by whom the *contract* has really been made, and has been given up and deposited in the chancery of heaven, sealed by the Holy Spirit—when such souls, I say, in opposition to all this, act contrary to the Holy Spirit, it is peculiarly these to whom it is said, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit, by whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

By what may we trouble the Holy Spirit? In himself we can never grieve the Holy and immuta-

ble Spirit ; but we may trouble him in ourselves, and in other children of God. The Holy Spirit may be grieved in us, in a variety of ways. I will only touch upon a few points, heartily entreating, that whilst I am speaking upon this subject, every one will not think of some other person, but of himself, and examine himself before the all-seeing eye of God, whether and how far, he himself may be found culpable in this matter.

I.—We grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom we are sealed, when, in conformity, with our calling and conviction, we do not seek faithfully to follow his attractions, allurements, and admonitions ; but after feeling the first glow, suffer ourselves to fall asleep again, and do not sufficiently advance in the paths of repentance and conversion, in the false supposition, that we are already pious people, and then seek to cover over our remaining unfaithfulness and depravities with the specious pretence of imperfections.

It is indeed true, that the work of conversion in its commencement, is very defective ; and a mother already rejoices, when a child learns to walk, even in the most imperfect manner, by the aid of chairs and benches. But shall the child never learn to go alone ? Shall it constantly continue to stumble ? If a mother saw that her child grew to be two, three, and even four years old or upwards, and yet would not learn to go alone, she would certainly be much grieved at it. In the same manner we grieve the

Holy Spirit of God, when, though he has such glorious intentions with respect to us, though he would so gladly help us forward, and so gladly make something perfect of us, we limit his operations, do not follow his holy motions, guidance, and leadings, and are willing to remain maimed cripples in our Christianity. O ye immortal souls, do not grieve, in such a manner, the Holy Spirit, by whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption !

II.—We grieve the Holy Spirit, also, by all kinds of dissimulation, hypocrisy, guile, and error, by secret and very subtle concupiscence, which the Apostle here adduces ; that is, when the individual, in his outward actions or in his inward state, is not sincere before God, and does not suffer himself to be made free from every thing, but secretly retains something or other in his heart. O my friends ! let us however reflect what a heinous sin this is. Ananias and Sapphira committed this very sin (Acts v.) They sold their field, gave the money to the Apostles ; but still retained a little of it. O how dearly did this little cost them ! They paid for it with their lives, and were obliged to hear the severe reproof “ How is it, that ye have agreed together to lie unto the Holy Spirit ? Ye have not lied unto men, but unto God.” O my friends ! ought we to grieve the Holy Spirit, by withholding any thing from him ? by covering and disguising ourselves in any species of dissimulation and hypocrisy ? For instance, when the individual knows and acknowledges what is wrong

in him, and yet does not abstain from it ; by such hypocrisy and dissimulation, he grieves the Holy Spirit of God, and will suffer loss, in consequence of it, in his state of grace.

We grieve the Holy Spirit by every species of double-mindedness ; when, for instance, by suppressing the Spirit and all his motions, we let ourselves be seduced gradually to assume a form of godliness, according to which, we seem, indeed, outwardly, to retain our piety, whilst faithfully assisting in every outward religious exercise, and seek, by this means, to show that we are blameless and virtuous ; but still continue to cleave, with our hearts to the world as before, without ever once sincerely detaching ourselves from it. The Apostle James says to such characters, " Purify your hearts, ye double-minded." " Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God ?" Do you suppose you have found out a middle way ? he means to say ;—or " know ye not" (he adds, according to the original) " that the Spirit of God desires you even to jealousy ?" Yea, that he woos us, as it were, for our hearts, and for our love ? Supposing a bridegroom were to see that his beloved, his bride attached herself also to others, she would then be an adulteress ; or if he did it, he would be an adulterer. Now the Holy Spirit of God desires us even to jealousy. He cannot bear that a heart which he inhabits, which he has so dearly sealed with his own Spirit's gracious power, that such a heart should cleave to the world, by which he is grieved,

as a married man is grieved, when his spouse is not sincere in her love to him. O my friends, grieve not the Holy Spirit by such double-mindedness and shameful aberration from the Most High ! Let us love nothing in such a manner, as not willingly to renounce it for Jesu's sake.

III.—We grieve the Holy Spirit, when we resist, in the smallest degree, in our hearts and minds, his salutary counsels, operations, and requirements, and do not render due obedience to them. Now when the Holy Spirit thus works upon our hearts, with the intention of promoting our progress, and of maturing us in the divine life ; when he is willing to make us free from those things, and we nevertheless remain as it were unsusceptible, and can suffer the Holy Spirit to reprove, correct, and remind us, day after day, and year after year, respecting one and the same subject, without ever seeking in an active manner to fulfil his requirements, and without ever giving our consent to his desires—it is thus we grieve the Holy Spirit by such resistance and disobedience, although his intentions are so sincere, so faithful, and so kind with respect to us.

Let us call to mind what stands written respecting the old world (Gen. vi.) God there says, “My Spirit shall not always strive with men, seeing that they are flesh.” Now it would be a dreadful judgment upon any of you, were God to say, “I have so long made the attempt with thee, I will not always strive and reprove thee ; I have so often told thee to

refrain from this or that particular thing, and not grieve me by thy perverseness; but if thou wilt not, behold I will cease to abide with thee, I will not always continue thus to bear with thee." You see, therefore, my friends! into what great danger we run, when we act thus in our course. The holy martyr Stephen says in Acts vii. "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit." This, indeed, is not so evidently the case in the sealed children of God, but yet it frequently occurs in a subtle manner; and they have reason to be ashamed before God, that they frequently conduct themselves, thus perversely, in refusing to fulfil that, which this precious guest so cordially desires of them, and which they also acknowledge to be just and right, and to be pleasing and acceptable to him.

IV.—"Grieve not the Holy Spirit, by whom ye are sealed." We grieve the Holy Spirit as often as we cherish, and exemplify any thing, in our hearts, thoughts, and words, which is, in the smallest degree contrary to the qualities of his nature. These qualities of the Holy Spirit are expressly pointed out to us, particularly in the 5th chap. to the Galatians, 22, 23 verses, where it is said, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance"—all such like things are fruits of the Spirit. Now when we cherish any thing within us, or express it in our words or thoughts, which is contrary to these

qualities, we thereby grieve the Holy Spirit in us, and frequently also in other children of God.

I will only mention a few things. For instance, every thing of a fiery, violent, and wrathful nature, which we feel within us, if we cherish it we grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Our Saviour says, in the Gospel of Luke, to Peter and the other disciples, who wished to cause fire to fall from heaven, because the Samaritans would not receive him, "Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of." It is true, Elias did it; but his was not such a spirit, although it was a good spirit; but my Spirit, the Spirit of meekness, the Pentecostal Spirit, cannot bear such unbecoming hateful things; no wrath nor bitterness can exist with him; he cannot endure any fiery qualities; every thing must be rendered tractable, every thing must be meek. Frequently, when we grow warm, even in good things, and give way to anger, we ought to call to mind the words of the Apostle James, "The wrath of man (or of woman) never worketh what is right before God;" even in the most righteous matter, and when we have the best intentions, we must never give room or place in our hearts to our natural violence and impetuosity, or we shall grieve the meek and holy Spirit of God. We must be very careful in our words, works, and thoughts, to avoid every thing that is violent, severe, and unbroken; for by such like harsh, violent, bitter, and unbroken emotions of the mind, the Holy Spirit is grieved, and our hearts are also troubled. Nor must we grieve the Holy Spirit by other dispo-

sitions, which might intrude themselves upon us ; for instance, by giving way, in our hearts, to any impure lusts, unclean desires, impure, and unholy thoughts. O, the Spirit of decorum, the chaste and dove-like Spirit, cannot bear or suffer any thing impure in our hearts ! It is certainly something very different, when the man is compelled to suffer any thing of this nature against his will, and sighs most heartily for deliverance ; when he lets himself be driven, by the Holy Spirit, to Christ and his throne of grace earnestly entreating deliverance ; it will then not be imputed to him as sin, for the sake of Christ ; but if he cherishes it, if the soul rests in it, and cleaves to it, the Holy Spirit is grieved, and our hearts are severely oppressed by it.

V.—We grieve the Holy Spirit, also, by the obstinacy and unbrokenness of our wills, which is usually called “self-will,” when the individual so pertinaciously insists upon his own judgment and his own opinion, that he cannot and will not give way in the least, but seeks to maintain his own sentiments on all occasions, as though he were always in the right. By such an unbrokenness, the pliant and peace-loving Spirit of Jesus Christ is much grieved, both in us and in other children of God.

We grieve the Holy Spirit of God by every thing of a volatile, boisterous, and unruly nature and deportment in our life and conduct. O, the Holy Spirit of God is a peaceful, a quiet Spirit ! He cannot at all endure a trifling and boisterous deportment, in

unnecessary, and superfluous jesting, or filthy speeches; unrestrained laughter, jokes and other follies and nonsense, the Holy Spirit, who is a gentle and pure Spirit, is very much grieved in the hearts of believers. O, let us therefore, stand upon our guard! Let us, by the impulse of that Spirit, who announces himself in the heart, seek strictly to observe the bounds of inward abstraction.

VI.—The Holy Spirit is also particularly grieved by all suspicion, envy, hatred, bitterness, and every thing that is contrary to the spirit of love, which we cherish in our hearts; by all implacability cherished towards any single individual; but incomparably more so, when it is cherished towards a child of God. O! the Holy Spirit is a spirit of love and of peace, who can never dwell in the hearts of those where such things are cherished. Therefore let us on no account grieve him, by such an unbecoming deportment; but let us rather clothe ourselves with his salutary and divine perfections, and conduct ourselves, in all things, in accordance with them.

VII.—The Holy Spirit of God is grieved further, by every species of sophistry in which we indulge concerning the nature and ways of God; when, for instance, we reason too much upon his inward movements, incitements, and admonitions, so that although we recognize what is our duty, we nevertheless do not follow it, but say to ourselves, this is a matter which does not require so much strictness,

and in which Christianity does not consist. It is by such argumentation and sophistry that the Spirit of God, who is a Spirit of truth, and knows better than we, is much grieved. Supposing I had taken a guide, who was to show me an unknown path, and I were continually to say to him, this is not the right way; we must take another direction! Would not this be acting foolishly? Therefore let us walk directly towards that, which this infallible light inwardly points out to us; let us hear what the Spirit of Truth says, and not what corrupt and darkened reason speaks; let us follow the divine leading and guidance, unconditionally, and without reasoning upon it in the least.

We grieve the Holy Spirit, when we set bounds to him by our reason or our unbelief; and think according to human axioms, that a man may attain so and so far, and no farther; that we cannot live so perfectly as the Apostles and primitive Christians lived, or even as some individuals do in the present day; that if all men, in order to be saved, must live in such a manner, there would scarcely be one in a thousand saved. It is in this way we grieve the Holy Spirit, by setting bounds to him in such a manner. O the Holy Spirit goes and leads further than I, or any child of man, can ever think or believe! Let us therefore follow his guidance magnanimously, and, as it were, with closed eyes; and then we shall see, that he will do wonders with respect to us. He will make holy men of us; he will bestow more grace and perfec-

tion upon us, than we, in our little faith, can think or comprehend.

VIII.—But we also grieve the Holy Spirit, when we bind his hands, as it were, by our faintheartedness, by our unbelief, and by the constant consideration of our wants and infirmities. For instance, when we are conscious of our great and manifold weaknesses, together with the utter inability of our own powers, and we then continue lying in utter despondency, and do not confide in the Holy Spirit and his power and goodness, that he is able and willing to deliver us entirely from our infirmities, and that it is an easy matter for him to make something entire of us, and to bring us to perfection.

O how many well-meaning souls often lie and complain, weep and lament, and do not even once rub their eyes, so as to be able to see what the Holy Spirit purposes respecting them! He, my dearest friends! can do abundantly more than we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. We ought, therefore, filially to resign ourselves to his guidance, and not grieve him further in this manner, since he has already bestowed so many benefits upon us. Did we ever possess, in ourselves, any thing that was good, before the conversion which the Holy Spirit wrought in us? Were we not slaves of Satan, did we not wear the devil's livery? And yet he sought us, yet he laboured with us! You see, therefore, my dearest friends, how kind his intentions are towards us! If

there were a friend, who had shown us a thousandth part of the love and fidelity manifested towards us by the Holy Spirit of God, and yet we should have no confidence in him, and were always running either before him or from him—this would be acting very ill ; and thus it is, that we grieve the Holy Spirit of God by our culpable mistrust in not giving the glory to him, and by our want of confidence in his ability to make of miserable sinners, upright souls.

Now then, in a word, and to conclude, let us give the Holy Spirit an unlimited authority in our hearts. It is he, who has begun the work in us ; he it is, also, who must accomplish it, and will do so, to the eternal glory of his name. But should one or other of you, enter into himself, and reflect with himself, saying, ‘ If that which I hear is really so, and if our dear Saviour expects from us something so lofty and elevated, how does it stand with me ? Whose image and superscription do I bear in my interior ? ’ If, I say, any now present should think thus, they will do well to stop a few moments, and prosecute the consideration a little further. We are hastening, with rapid strides, to eternity ; and we have perhaps only to take a few little steps, before we reach the termination of our present life. Every one has a spirit to guide him, who accompanies him to an endless eternity, either the good or the evil spirit. Now as our journey leads to eternity, and as every thing depends upon our not mistaking the right way, let us therefore choose the best guide of all, the Spirit of Truth, that we may be led by him into all truth.

and be faithfully and most securely preserved from all aberrations. How terrified should we be, if the great day, the day of death, and of judgment were to come, and we had not had this spirit as our guide and leader." Should we be able to believe, that he would then bear so beautiful a title towards us, as he here does with reference to believers at the day of redemption? Can we rejoice in it? Can we hope for it? Can we cheerfully and courageously go to meet him? Ought it not to be thus, my dearest friends? O let us therefore, this very hour, give God the glory, and cast ourselves at his feet, as poor and hell-deserving sinners; let us not turn our backs upon the grace, which is offered us in the name of Jesus Christ, but whilst it is called to-day, whilst the Holy Spirit still testifies, that the time to repent and be converted is at hand, let us lay hold of it, without spending a single moment longer in impenitence.

But we, who are called of God to such great blessedness, we, I say, must now look well to it, that we walk accordingly, and that we walk worthily before the Lord to all well pleasing, Col. i. 10, as becometh the vocation wherewith we are called, in all humility, meekness and patience (Ephes. iv. 12.) as the followers of God (ch. v. 1) and children of light (verse 9). Ah! I find in many the divine image so faded, weak, cold, and superficial, so obscured and mutilated, that it is scarcely any longer cognizable. O let us at length become something perfect and entire! let us seek, with more zeal and solicitude, to become more and more complete in

the renewal after the image of God; and in virtue thereof, resign ourselves entirely and without any reservation to our Saviour, that our faith may be truly enlightened, and that we may not always continue to doubt, despond, and complain, but be able to walk before our God with firm and sure steps.

We speak highly to others of the great blessedness of the children of God; it is therefore extremely reasonable, that we ourselves should possess and enjoy it, in order that we may speak of its real value from our own experience, and testify of it, with so much the greater joyfulness and power, and not only with our words, but much more so with our life and conversation, and be able effectually to convince others, that true Christianity is nothing imaginary but something real, something entire, vital, and operative. Seeing that God, at the creation, destined us to salvation, that we should be a temple of the Holy Spirit, and that by his renewing and regenerating power, we should become partakers of the most exalted dignity, even of the divine nature itself—let us therefore faithfully employ the brief and precious season of grace, in order that the work of God may be fully accomplished in us.

The day of redemption will soon arrive; let us therefore take courage, and not despond in the various processes of humiliation, refining, and purification. These are necessary, they appertain to it, in order that the seal may be very deeply and indelibly impressed. If we wish to make a fair impression upon

wax, the wax must be rendered soft and liquid by fire ; and thus also our souls. Before the Holy Spirit can impress and impart his image, in a complete manner, in and upon us, we must certainly pass through more purifying fires than one. O that he may only make us truly soft and pliant, that he may make us fit and suitable for receiving the impression of his seal, in the most impressive and most cognizable manner upon our hearts !

Therefore let come what will, though necessity and death, though hell and the devil, and though the great day of judgment come, if we only bear the seal of the Holy Spirit impressed upon our hearts, God, who acknowledges us as his, will also acknowledge us as his, before his holy angels on that day, and take us with him into his heavenly habitation, and into the blissful and eternal mansions of peace. Amen !

Now, therefore, let us unite with each other in the presence of God, in simple prayer, fervently thanking the Lord for his great grace and goodness, and entreating him that he would bless to us the truths, which have now been stammered forth.

PRAYER.

O thou omnipresent holy God, thou thrice holy Being, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ! our hearts, and all that is within us, bless, praise, and glorify thee, that thou, O all-sufficient Being, who didst not require either angels or men, yet whose will it

was to create us with an intention so divine and holy, and a purpose so noble and sublime, as that we should bear thine image and seal upon us, in order, both in time and eternity, to be capable of thy divine perfections, and to be able to contemplate, love, honour, glorify, and adore thee, our God. We thank, we praise, and glorify thy name, and thy great mercy, in having again opened unto us, in and through Christ, the way, by which we may again come forth from the corruption of our sinful fall, and may re-attain to our original form.

O thou ever-loving goodness, thou lover of the human race, grant that my heart, and that all our hearts may receive a fresh impression of thy love, of thy unspeakable love to man, that we may no longer resist thy holy purposes through unbelief or perverseness, but may give ourselves completely and entirely to thee again !

We thank thee, also, O Lord ! that thou hast caused this thy precious gospel and glad tidings to be published unto us, and that in more ways than one, in order that thou mightest allure us to this sublime, angelic, heavenly, and divine blessedness. We thank thee, that to this end, thou hast granted us this Pentecostal season and this opportunity. Now, O Lord ! we have heard words, we have, it is to be hoped, heard words of truth, although in much infirmity ; now let thy Holy Spirit impress the seal upon them in our hearts, that we may all essentially experience the power of this truth in our hearts.

There are those now present, who have hitherto

borne the image of the earthly Adam, nay, even the image of the devil ; O that they may be now sacredly ashamed, disturbed, troubled, and perplexed before thy face ! O that they also may experience what took place on the day of Pentecost, that they may exclaim, with their whole hearts, “ Men and brethren, what must we do to be saved ? ” O that they may be struck to the ground, rendered contrite and pliant by the sceptre of the kingdom of Jesus, give thee the glory, and eternally renounce Satan and his kingdom, in order to cast themselves as they are, completely as they are, into the hands of Jesus ! O make such individuals truly troubled, penitent, and perplexed ! Let their hearts have no rest in their miserable and wretched state, until they are brought, with us, to true faith in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God !

O thou eternal love ! let thy Holy Spirit prosecute his work, more and more perfectly, in our hearts ! Our days are hastening to their termination. Ah, how many amongst us, at least, have been so long awakened, have been so long under the operation of the Spirit, and yet how faintly and indistinctly is his seal seen upon us ! O let the few days, which we have still to live on this side eternity, be solely directed to become more and more complete in grace, and that the image of Jesus Christ, the image of our God, may shine forth in us, more and more ! O that thine eyes might so behold us, as thou wouldst gladly see us, that thou mightest behold thyself in us, thy image, and thy seal, which thou hast impressed upon

us by thy Spirit. O make us mutually prudent in our whole life and conversation, that we may not trouble thy precious Holy Spirit, in any thing, or in any manner; but resign ourselves sincerely, cheerfully, and without offence to his drawing, impulse, and operations, and receive his influences into us, in order that, thereby, we may be transformed, more and more, into the perfect image of God !

Hasten, Lord ! since our days are hasting away. Hasten, that we may accomplish them in thy grace, and may thus be enabled to await the day of death and of judgment without terror, nay, even with pleasure, as the day of our redemption. O thou important day ! O day so dreadful to all those, who bear the image of Satan ; but joyful to all those, who have the seal, the image of the Holy Spirit, engraven upon their hearts. O thou great day ! be thou ever before our eyes ! be thou continually as a weight to our hearts, in order that all our days may be directed to the approach of this day, and that we may be able to stand before the light, which shall reveal that which is hidden.

Now, O Lord ! bless us, and bless, with us, all those, who are partakers of such a high vocation ; bless every thing that has been spoken, here and elsewhere, during this festival, according to thy heart. O that it may be and continue a true day of Pentecost ! Have mercy upon all that are still afar off ! Let them also experience the fulfilment of thy precious promise, that thou wouldst pour out thy Spirit upon all flesh ! O shed forth thy Holy

Spirit more universally, that many, yea, all, may bow themselves at the footstool of our Heavenly King of Glory! O hear our imperfect prayer, and supply, by thine inward operation and power, what may have been deficient in human words! We ask all, from free mercy, to the glorification of our great Saviour in our hearts.

Amen and Amen.

THE END.

